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New Religious Phenomena in Central and Eastern Europe



edited by
Irena Borowik, Grzegorz Babiński



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NEW RELIGIOUS PHENOMENA IN CENTRAL
AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Irena Borowik Grzegorz Babiński (eds.)

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Table of Contents

Irena Borowik, <i>Introduction. Religion in Post-Communist Societies – Confronting the Frozen Past and the Peculiarities of the Transformation</i> . . .	7
Eileen Barker, <i>But Who's Going to Win? National and Minority Religions in Post-Communist Society</i>	25
I. RELIGION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY	
Zdzisław Mach, <i>The Roman Catholic Church and the Transformation of Social Identity in Eastern and Central Europe</i>	63
Ewa Nowicka, <i>Roman Catholicism and the Content of "Polishness"</i>	81
Grzegorz Babiński, <i>Borderland Identity. Religious and National Identification in the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland</i>	93
Andrzej Sadowski, <i>The Place of Religion in the Personal Identity Structure of the Inhabitants of the Polish-Belorussian Borderland</i>	113
Vanda Rusetskaya, <i>Interethnic Relations and the Religious Identification of the Population of Belarus</i>	127
II. THE NEW FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS AND CHURCHES	
Michael P. Hornsby-Smith, <i>The Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe: the View from Western Europe</i>	133
Eugeniy Babosov, <i>The Revival of Religiosity in Belarus</i>	151
Nonka B. Todorova, <i>Religion in Post-Communist Bulgaria</i>	163
Ján Mišovič, <i>Religion in Czech Republic of the 1990s in View of Sociological Research</i>	187
Miklós Tomka, <i>Hungarian post-World War II. Religious Development and the Present Challenge of New Churches and New Religious Movements</i> . .	203
Irena Borowik, <i>Institutional and Private Religion in Poland 1990-1994</i> . . .	235

III. NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

James T. Richardson, <i>New Religions and Religious Freedom in Eastern and Central Europe: A Sociological Analysis</i>	257
Piotr Wiench, <i>Neo-Paganism in Central Eastern European Countries</i> . . .	283
Detlef Pollack, <i>New Religious Movements in East Germany</i>	293
Anatoly Kolodny, Ludmila Philipovitch, <i>The Non-traditional Religiosity in the Context of the Spiritual Revival of Ukraine</i>	301
Przemysław S. Jaźwiński, <i>The Development of ISKCON in Poland Since the Mid-70s</i>	315
Istvan Kamaras, <i>Devotees of Krishna in Hungary</i>	325
Maria Libiszowska-Żółtkowska, <i>The Unification Church in Poland</i>	341
Tadeusz Doktor, <i>Hinduism in Poland</i>	349
Svetlana Tchervonnaya, <i>The Revival of Animistic Religion in the Mari El Republic</i>	369
Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, <i>Anti-Cult Movements</i>	379

Irena Borowik

INTRODUCTION. RELIGION IN POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETIES – CONFRONTING THE FROZEN PAST AND THE PECULIARITIES OF THE TRANSFORMATION

Since the collapse of Communism, the countries and societies of Central and Eastern Europe have experienced a unique process of rapid change, in which all societal subsystems have been involved. The problems and questions concerning the involvement of religion in this process as discussed in this book, were the main topics of the international conference organised in December 1995, in Kraków at the Jagiellonian University, where over 60 papers concerning religious changes in Central and Eastern Europe were presented. The authors of some chapters in this book attended the conference, while others were invited to write papers in order to make the book more representative. The conference was the third in the cycle “Religion and Churches in Central and Eastern Europe” and was instrumental in establishing the “International Association for the Study of Religion in Central and Eastern Europe” (ISORECEA); its main task is the coordination of scientific research on religion in this part of Europe.

Taking part in the organisation of all three conferences as well as participating in their sessions allows me to say that, in spite of the general topic being different every year, some problems and papers appear every time with intentional regularity, discussing changes concerning traditional organised forms of religion and religiosity, New Religious Movements (NRMs), and the participation of religion in shaping or reshaping the national identity of societies in Central and Eastern Europe. The content of this book

comes from the recognition of this regularity as a sign of the significance of the leading themes and it is reflected in the division of the book to three relevant parts: religion and national identity (part I), the change in traditional (or main line) religions and churches (part II), and New Religious Movements (part III).

The book opens with a paper by Eileen Barker¹ which offers an overview of NRMs in the context of the complex historical and confessional differences in Central and Eastern Europe, and leads to a synthetic presentation of the problems facing the traditional churches, such as: accusations concerning collaboration with oppressive regimes; the anti-religious education of the population; a demographic imbalance with priests who are either very young or very old; the reticence to working under new conditions arising from new needs (partly coming from the competition of NRMs and Evangelical Protestantism, who are very efficient teachers); the lack of money in the Churches and also low salaries of priests; conflicts over Church properties confiscated under Communism and described more extensively, competition coming from alternative religions and the rather hostile reaction of the national churches towards them.

The phrase used by Barker in her title “But Who’s Going to Win”, suggests two new features in post-Communist reality: the process of competition between different religious organisations brought about by democratisation and more open borders; a situation typical for the differentiated societies of Western democracy and, mutually, difficulties in accepting this fact, which are expressed in the common feeling that someone “has to win.” Some of the strongest defenders of such a position are the traditional churches, and one of the arguments used by them is that the close link between religion and nation – as the churches define it – expresses the “true nature” of a given nation and defends its particularities and interests. The first part of the book is an attempt to examine this relationship more closely.

¹ Barker, E.: *But Who’s Going to Win: National and Minority Religions in Post-Communist Society*, pp. 25-63.

I. Religion and National Identity

Religion, churches, and individual religiosity – in the opinion of the authors of this part of the book – played a much more significant role, not only in the building of social, cultural, and national identity in Eastern and Central than in Western Europe, but also in the change of these identities. How can this be explained? A set of arguments has been formulated, two of which are most important: the history of these countries as peripheral areas,² the lack of an independent national state in long periods of history, and the development of nations in the modern sense without their own states. As a result of these historical processes, the identity of those societies, in Mach's opinion, was built on the basis of shared mythology, literature, art, and culture with religion as a part of this.³

The theoretical and descriptive statements are analysed more systematically in two fields – as a link between Catholicism and nation in Poland (Mach, Nowicka), and as the specific meaning of religion in forming the identity in Polish-Belorussian and Polish-Ukrainian borderlands (Babiński, Sadowski, Rusetskaya). The basis for this analysis and these conclusions are empirical studies and research conducted in the 1990s in Belarus, Poland, and Ukraine. These three countries significantly differ from each other, not only in development of national identity, but also in mutual relations in the process of its building. Polish national identity is the most advanced and it is supported by the historical memory of having been an independent state, while subordination to other states (to Poland and Russia) is the dominant experience of Ukrainians and Belorussians. It is why Babiński speaks about the Ukrainian national awakening in present times⁴ and Sadowski formulates

² Babiński refers here to Rokkan's centre – periphery theory. See Babiński G.: *Borderland Identity: Religious and National Identification on the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland*, p. 94.

³ Mach, Z.: *The Roman Catholic Church and the Transformation of Social Identity in Eastern and Central Europe*, p. 65.

⁴ Babiński, G.: *op cit*, pp. 99-102.

a thesis that the Belorussian sense of national identity is still in a formative state.⁵

Identity is seen either in cultural categories, as a process of building “symbolic models which give meaning to the world, offer an interpretation of experience and enable people to understand the reality of life in its present form, as well as the past and the future”⁶ or as individual identity with the stress put on ethnic belonging, specific to minorities in borderlands.⁷

In spite of these differences in definition, religion appears as one of the important elements in identifying one's own and others nationality, especially in Poland, where Roman Catholicism is treated as the national religion, and in Ukraine, where the Greek Catholic Church plays a comparable role, mostly in western parts of the country. The situation in Belarus is more complex because of weaker religious ties and because of the fact that the religion of the majority, Orthodoxy, is directly linked to the centre in Moscow. It is not by accident that the political elite of this country were trying to present the Greek-Catholic faith as the national denomination of Belarus. Their attempt could have arisen from observations that in Poland and in Ukraine, religion and Churches identified with nation serve as vehicles of national identity and that differentiation from influential neighbours, Russia and Poland, respectively, could be a very useful instrument of cultural independence. Those politicians were unsuccessful and Rusetskaya's research shows that over 40% of Belorussians identify the Greek-Catholic religion with Ukrainians, which could be a reason for the failure of this project.⁸ What is also important in the case of Belarus is that while considering Poles as Catholics, and Belorussians as mainly Orthodox is widespread in the western part of the country, in the sample gathered from the entire republic,

⁵ Sadowski, A.: *The Place of Religion in the Personal Identity Structure of the Polish-Belorussian Borderland*, p. 119.

⁶ Mach, Z.: *op cit*, p. 66.

⁷ Sadowski, A.: *op cit*, p. 116.

⁸ Rusetskaya, V.: *Inter-Ethnic Relations and Religious Identification of the Population of Belarus*, p. 130.

almost 80% do not identify Poles (and Lithuanians) with Catholicism, and Belorussians and Russians with Orthodoxy.⁹ One reason for this is the weakness of religion in Belarus and another is the slow development of national identity, which is also expressed in the fact that one could hardly hear the Belorussian language in Minsk and in other cities of the country; the population of Belarus supports the political aims of President Lukashenka in respect to the union with Russia. The large number of ethnic minorities (123)¹⁰ probably also contributes to this.

Research conducted by Sadowski also proves that national and religious ties are less important in the Belorussian than in the Polish borderland.¹¹ Orthodox religion, in Sadowski's opinion, still constitutes a basic component of the cultural identity of Belorussians living in the Białystok region (the city and the region in the northeastern part of Poland, inhabited by a Belorussian minority) while it is less significant in Belarus. Another important discovery of his research is that local ties (family, neighbours) in this borderland dominate national ones.

The importance of religion in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland is much stronger. Presently, as Babiński confirmed while testing his hypothesis, the crystallisation of national identity of Poles in Ukraine and of Ukrainians in Poland is based mainly on religion and religious differences, because economic, cultural, and linguistic differences are insignificant.¹²

His respondents use terms "Polish" or "Ukrainian" while talking about religion. It happens this way because the language in everyday use is the language of the majority (Polish in Poland and Ukrainian in Ukraine). Cultural and economic conditions are the same; only religion serves as an element of differentiation. For Babiński's respondents, sometimes there is no difference between nation and religion. They opposed religiously mixed marriages and explained that two nations should not sleep in one bed,

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Sadowski, A.: *op cit*, p. 119.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Babiński, G.: *op cit*, p. 106.

because changing religion is in their opinion equivalent to changing one's national identity.¹³ The same occurs in Poland in respect to the members of religious minorities who stress that the Polish Roman Catholic majority treats them as non-Polish, although they define themselves as Poles.¹⁴ The strength of this stereotype in Poland, i.e., seeing Poles as exclusively Catholics, sociologists see as rooted in history, especially in the role of Roman Catholicism in the survival of the Polish nation under partitions, and in the political role of the Roman Catholic Church in confrontations with the lack of an independent state and later with the communist state. This long period playing the formative role in institutionalised religion in Poland froze, as Mach puts it, polarisation in society, not only ethnic, but strictly political; on us: Catholic, good, patriots; and them: Communists, atheists, traitors. In Sadowski's opinion, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland still acts along these old divisions, not being prepared to function in a democratic society, not meeting the requirements of an open society, and using the language of the political struggle comparable to the past. Contrary to the past, the Church is presently exclusive in respect to the members of the Church, at least those who are politically engaged and present attitudes incompatible with the official positions taken by the Church.¹⁵ Taking these positions, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland opposes integration with Europe, stresses moral issues with a strong tendency to influence the law, and argues against Communism and Liberalism without differentiating between these two ideologies.¹⁶

Many sociologists stress that post-Communist societies face a kind of ideological vacuum after the fall of Communism. The old order was ruined almost over night; the new perspectives and positive images of the future could not be built in the same way. Widely spread secularisation was undoubtedly one of the most striking features in countries of the former

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹⁴ Nowicka, E.: *Roman Catholicism and the Content of Polishness*, p. 90.

¹⁵ Mach, Z.: *op cit*, pp. 75-79.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Soviet block. Describing present religiosity, sociologists of religion discuss “revival” or “reawakening” of religion. Are there any generalisations that could be made in respect to all post-Communist societies?

II. The New Features of Traditional Religions and Churches. Religious Revival or Secularisation?

All the papers in this part of the book refer to the past in varying degrees, which is necessary for understanding the developments of recent years. In the core part they concentrate on the change in position of the Churches and in relation of society towards religion. The past weighs heavily on the present, as a variety of affects of Communism on the position of religion, from its marginalisation in some countries, such as in the former Soviet Union, through almost total destruction in Albania, and to the strengthening of religion in Poland. In every country the past has shaped the present in different ways, having an impact not only on problems and conflicts linked to religion, but also on the search of their solutions. Before the confrontation with Communism, the Churches and religions were the central elements of the sociocultural system in the prevailing rural peasant societies of Central and Eastern Europe. Despite this, developments under Communism were different, influenced not only by the degree of persecution, but also by the adaptation strategies of the Churches and their leaders. Socialist modernisation with such features as industrialisation, migration of people from villages to cities, growing education, employment of women, and the planned atheisation of society also caused secularisation.¹⁷ Again, manifestations of this process varied from the growing number of nonbelievers in the former republics of the Soviet Union, Czech, East Germany, Hungary, and Romania, to the selectivity of religious beliefs and acceptance of the moral teaching of the churches typical for secularisation. In Hungary,

¹⁷ Miklos Tomka using a term de-Christianisation suggests that these changes resulted not from secularisation but from social decomposition and anomie. See Tomka, M.: *Hungarian post-World War II Religious Development...*, p. 211.

religiosity diminished to 10-15% of pre-Communist time,¹⁸ and in Bulgaria only 13% of population were believers.¹⁹ In Poland, popular religiosity was very high, about 80% of respondents declared themselves believers, but some dogmas were accepted selectively; for instance belief in Hell or in life after death was much lower than belief in God.²⁰

The Churches – their position in society and their role vis-à-vis the Communist state, are described by authors in the following set of characteristics:

1. A symbiotic relationship with the regime (in the sense of total dependence on the acts of the state, the necessity of reaction toward it, the initiative in the state's hands);²¹

2. Playing the role of formal representative of the opposition, as the only institution which survived under Communism;²²

3. Isolation from the world and from the development of Catholicism after the Second Vatican Council;²³

4. The idealised position of the Catholic Church in societies in terms of prestige, and the expectation that the Church could solve all problems²⁴ expressed in a very high level of confidence in the Church in case of Poland.²⁵ The insignificance of the Protestant Church in Eastern Germany;²⁶

5. The traditional authoritarian type of leadership in the Catholic Church.²⁷ The weakness of the leadership and clergy in Orthodox countries;²⁸

¹⁸ *Op cit*, p. 214.

¹⁹ Todorova, N.: *Religion in Post-Communist Bulgaria*, p. 165.

²⁰ Borowik, I.: *Institutional and Private Religion in Poland, 1990-1994.*, p. 249.

²¹ Hornsby-Smith, M.P.: *The Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe: The View from Western Europe*, p.p. 135-138.

²² Tomka M.: *op cit*, p.214; Borowik, I., *op cit*, p. 248.

²³ Hornsby-Smith, M.P.: *op cit*, p. 143.

²⁴ Tomka, M.: *op cit*, p. 214.

²⁵ Borowik, I.: *op cit*, p. 251.

²⁶ Pollack, D.: *New Religious Movements in East Germany*, p. 298

²⁷ Mach, Z.: *op cit*, p. 73.

²⁸ Kolodny, A., Philipowitch, L.: *Non-traditional Religions in Ukraine*, p. 305.

6. Conflicting relations with minority religions, influenced by state policies which either favoured small churches (the Orthodox Church in Poland, religious minorities in Hungary) or persecuted them to a higher degree than dominant religion (Baptists, Pentecostals, Catholics, and Greek-Catholics in Soviet Union).

All these characteristics seem to be very significant after the fall of Communism. The Churches and their core members aspire to take the positions of pre-war and pre-Communist times, in many senses, i.e., to restore properties, to return lands and buildings that were nationalised, to have a privileged position in the legal system, to be present in public life in a way comparable to pre-Communist times, and to have an impact on society as a whole. It could not be done easily, if at all.

The societies of post-Communist countries are differentiated in their attitudes towards religion. Data allow us to talk about the growth of religiosity in many countries. It is a very visible trend in Eastern Europe. In 1989 65% of the population in Belarus considered themselves nonbelievers, and 22% as believers, while 5 years later the numbers were 35% and 43%, respectively.²⁹ In Ukraine 5% of the population were believers before the fall of Communism compared to 70% presently.³⁰ There is also a significant growth in the number of religious communities in both countries. In Belarus the number of registered communities grew almost by 1/3 in the period 1992-1994, i.e., from 1.340 to 1.855.³¹ In Bulgaria, 13% of believers before 1989 are compared to 60% in 1994,³² and in Hungary over 70% of the population identified themselves as religious persons.³³ The highest level of declared religiosity is in Poland, 86% of the representative sample described themselves as deeply devout or devout in 1994, and on this general level, neither growth nor decline has taken place.³⁴

²⁹ Babosov, E.: *The Revival of Religiosity in Belarus*, p. 153.

³⁰ Kolodny, A., Philipowitch, L.: *op cit*, p. 303.

³¹ Babosov, E.: *op cit*, p. 151.

³² Todorova, N.: *op cit*, table nr 5, p. 174.

³³ Tomka, M.: *op cit*, p. 232.

³⁴ Borowik, I.: *op cit* p. 240.

However, these data show only the surface of religious life. Looking at it more closely, the sociologists of these countries talk about the crisis of religion in Ukraine, privatisation of beliefs and morality in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland, and criticism towards the dominant churches in every country under consideration.

Some characteristic aspects of the belief system are – typical for Western societies – individualism, which is expressed in the low level of religious practices in all countries (apart from Poland), lack of commitment to the Churches, expressed as “believing on one’s own”; and nominality of the membership in the Church. In Hungary, for instance, Tomka estimates that 55% of people declaring themselves as religious belong to this group, and one million committed as opposed to 7 million of nominal members.³⁵ In Belarus 15.7% of believers declare a regular church-attendance, i.e., once a week, and a great number of those who call themselves “Christians on their own” do not commit themselves to any church.³⁶ In Bulgaria even among those “deeply devout”, 25% never go to church and 25% never pray. Another feature in this country is a high interest in magic, fortune-telling, and astrology, more intensive than interests in Orthodoxy.³⁷

Analysing these phenomena Todorova concludes that the privatisation of religion has developed rapidly under the post-totalitarian conditions³⁸. Borowik makes a similar conclusion for Poland, analysing the decline of confidence in the Roman Catholic Church, the selectivity of the system of beliefs, and the non-acceptance of the Catholic moral norms, especially in respect to sexual life.³⁹

The crisis in Church life is seen from many perspectives. Kolodny and Philipowitch express their opinion that religious revival is only

³⁵ Tomka, M.: *op cit*, p. 222.

³⁶ Babosov, E.: *op cit*, p. 160.

³⁷ Todorova, N.: *op cit*, p. 173, 175.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

³⁹ Borowik, I.: *op cit*, pp. 250-251.

superficial in Ukraine, a result of wishes and mass-media propagation. In their opinion, religion functions as a disintegrative factor of national renaissance because of the many conflicts between the traditional churches.⁴⁰

Another feature common for post-Communist countries is the involvement of religion in politics, which is expressed, not only in the Churches' engagement, but also in the use of religion and religious symbols in politics. The most spectacular political debates in Poland were linked to religion; the introduction of religious instruction to public schools, quarrels over the phrase of preamble ("in the name of God") in the constitution, the legal position of religious minorities, the work of a commission on some details of the concordat, not being yet confirmed by the Polish parliament, and last but not least, the problem of abortion and the changes of abortion law introduced in 1995, allowing abortion for so-called "social reasons".

Although the confrontation of the Catholic Churches of Central Eastern Europe with modernity was postponed by Communist suppression and the oppositional nature of religion, it is inevitable, as Hornsby-Smith predicts, to experience the same sort of internal conflicts which the Catholic Churches in the West have struggled with for the past three decades.⁴¹ Judging by the chapters concerning Orthodoxy in Eastern Europe it is possible to make a similar prediction in respect to that. One argument could be used already. All post-Communist countries experience pluralism, expressed by a growing number of NRMs and Protestant Churches of mainly Evangelical tradition. The reaction of traditional churches towards them is common in all countries under consideration, i.e., more or less open hostility. The presence of NRMs in post-Communist countries and their characteristics is the subject of the last part of the book.

⁴⁰ Kolodny, A., Philipowitch, L.: *op cit* p. 303.

⁴¹ Hornsby-Smith, M.P.: *op cit*, p. 147.

New Religious Movements are flourishing in post-Communist Europe in a way that may be comparable to the 1960s in Western Europe and the United States. First of all, there are good legal conditions for their functioning. In general, the law concerning religion respects religious freedom, registration of new religious groups is rather liberal, and it gives legal framework for activity of religious minorities and new religious movements among them. Under this new law, which was changed in all countries of this part of Europe after the collapse of Communism, a lot of NRMs were registered. For instance, in Poland 123 religious organisations exist currently compared to 48 in 1989,⁴² and in Ukraine, 70 registered (110 non-registered) compared to 9 organisations under the totalitarian regime.⁴³

There are a variety of new religious groups belonging to different religious traditions: Judeo-Christian, Buddhism or Hinduism. As Eileen Barker pointed out, the present wave of NRMs draw on very different sources, psychoanalytic ideas, political ideologies, science fiction, and UFOlogy.⁴⁴ Mormons and Bahai members, not counted as new elsewhere, are new in Central and Eastern Europe. The majority of NRMs came from Western Europe and the United States and in this sense these religions are imported. In Poland some of the movements of Hinduistic tradition appeared in the pre-war period (present mainly in artistic circles), some of them in the 1960s, and later.⁴⁵ In Ukraine, for instance, interest in Buddhism was manifest already in 1980s, but only after the collapse of Communism were NRMs able to register their activity as religious and be free of the persecution threat. Before this, Communist states, in order to prove the lack of interest in any religion, did not allow

⁴² Pasek Z.: *Charakterystyka Kościołów i związków religijnych zarejestrowanych w Polsce w latach 1988-1995 (Characteristics of the Churches and Religious Organisations Registered in Poland. 1988-1995)* in: "Nomos", 11/1995.

⁴³ Kolodny, A., Philipowitch, L.: *op cit*, p. 402.

⁴⁴ Barker, E.: *op cit*, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Doktor, T.: *Hinduism in Poland*, p. 349.

such activity, and some of the groups, members of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) for instance, were arrested or suffered from other forms of persecution.⁴⁶ These groups, partly according to the length of time of their activity, are better or worse organised. An example of a good network are the Buddhist groups in Poland, which founded the Buddhist Union in 1995. Another process, significantly contributing to the growth of the number of religious organisations, is the spread and internal division of many Evangelical churches, which in Ukraine are very successful in recruiting new members.

Some NRMs, Scientologists for example, do not register themselves as religious organisations but act under laws concerning societies, and some as psychotherapeutic groups. Due to this fact it is difficult to estimate exactly the number of all new religions.

Apart from new religions born elsewhere, there is also the growing popularity of neo-Paganism, which claims to continue the old, forgotten, pre-Christian traditions of every country. It is, together with national sentiments, a common characteristic of neo-Pagan groups in Europe, described in this book by Piotr Wiench, and Asiatic ethnic groups of Russia, given by Svetlana Tchervonnaya. In case of Asiatic ethnic groups, in particular, the return to religious tradition that dominated before Christianisation plays a political role in the struggle for cultural and political independence from Russia. According to Tchervonnaya, Paganism presently is the dominant religion in Mari Republic, and popular among Tchuvashi, Yakuts (shamanism), and in the Russian Ugro-Finnish North.⁴⁷ The popularity of animism in these ethnic groups is rooted in opposing religious and national identity. Being Orthodox is equal to being Russian; the revival of neo-Paganism means also a opposition against the Russian Orthodox Church's claim to a spiritual monopoly.⁴⁸

In Europe, neo-Pagans are divided into many small groups. Although their members typically belong to the artistic or intellectual elite of a given

⁴⁶ Barker, E.: *op cit*, p. 27.

⁴⁷ Tchervonnaya, S.: *The Revival of Animistic Religion in the Mari El Republic*, p. 372.

⁴⁸ *Op cit*, p. 373.

country and publish a significant number of magazines and books, in general they do not receive the expected response from society. But probably the same could be said about all NRMs in general. Nevertheless, some NRMs are more dynamic in their development than others. ISKCON belongs to the most popular groups in Central and Eastern Europe. It does not mean that it has become a statistically significant religious minority in any country, but looking at statistics, for instance in Poland, this new religion has noted 100% growth in the number of members in the period of last 10 years.⁴⁹

What are the reasons of the growing number of NRMs? Do NRMs in Central Eastern Europe differ from those in Western? What are the social characteristics of people joining NRMs? Which NRMs are more popular than others? What is the relation of post-Communist societies towards them?

One of the most frequent explanations given by the authors of this book, making an attempt to answer the first question, is the "spiritual vacuum" caused by the collapse of Communist ideology, a crisis in society, the destruction of close personal relationships,⁵⁰ and criticism of traditional Churches.⁵¹ Existing interest in looking for a transcendental meaning is the broadest condition for the success of any religion. Detlef Pollack sees the high level of secularisation as the main factor of low popularity of any religion, including NRMs, in East Germany, where "many families have had no ties to any Church at all for two generations and lack religious knowledge of any kind."⁵² However this element does not seem to explain the reasons sufficiently because secularisation was comparatively advanced in Belarus and Ukraine where, contrary to Germany, NRMs are successful in recruiting new members, and the same could be said about traditional Churches. Another element taken into consideration by Pollack could work in these countries, namely the lifestyle of Germans in his opinion, as characterised

⁴⁹ Jaźwiński, P.: *The Development of ISKCON in Poland Since the mid-70s*, p. 322.

⁵⁰ Kolodny A., Philipowitch, L.: *op cit*, p. 306.

⁵¹ Pollack, D.: *op cit*, p. 297.

⁵² Pollack, D.: *op cit*, p. 298.

by bourgeois values and domination of a material existence, problems that could not work yet in other post-Communist countries.

The most obvious reason for spreading NRMs is simply the possibility of the open borders and democratisation of post-Communist societies. Members and missionaries of NRMs may come to these countries to teach about their religion just like others, such as tourists or investors. The collapse of Communism means, not only a free market of goods, but also a free market of ideas – political, economic, scientific, and religious.

There are also individual mechanisms which decide about the religious choices one makes. Research conducted among members of NRMs reveals that the majority of them could be characterised either as believers (or deep believers) or as “searching” for religious meaning of life before conversion.⁵³ Reconstruction of society and religious freedom could strengthen an individual searching for personal fulfilment, and pluralism could facilitate it. Members of NRMs stress such motives for conversion as the search for truth, the search for self-knowledge, self-perfection, and self-manifestation.⁵⁴ The psychological tests used by Tadeusz Doktor present the members of NRMs (belonging to Hinduism) as quite similar to those from the control group, but having a more positive self-image and a higher sense of meaning and purpose in life.⁵⁵ Undoubtedly those who join NRMs either as their first religion, or converts, must make a bigger effort to give a reason for themselves and for their relatives and friends in comparison to those who stay with a dominant religion in which they were born and socialised. Members of NRMs in this part of Europe, as elsewhere, are predominantly young and well-educated. In ethnically mixed countries the percent age

⁵³ In the case of the Polish members of the Unification Church, the majority of them (60%) were, as Libiszowska-Żółtkowska pointed out, above average religious, which means a regular religious activity going beside a basic requirement of the Church – taking part in charismatic or other religious movements before conversion. See Libiszowska-Żółtkowska, M.: *The Unification Church in Poland*, p. 342.

⁵⁴ Kolodny, A., Philipowitch, L.: *op cit*, pp. 310-311.

⁵⁵ Doktor, T.: *op cit*, p. 360.

of members representing ethnic minorities is higher than in society on average.⁵⁶

Looking at it one can ask if there are any differences between NRMs in Central Eastern Europe those in Western Europe?

There are some differences and some similarities. One of the differences in the case of new religions “imported” from the West is linked to the process of internal development of these religions, with special importance on the change of generations. As Barker noticed, the leaders of NRMs from the West, coming to teach in the newly liberated countries, being experienced members of their group for twenty years or longer, are not as radical as those who are new members and new converts. Due to this fact they could compromise, encourage new members to remain in contact with their families, continue their education or job, and to maintain good relations with society.⁵⁷ The network of information in general is much better than in the past, especially in some groups, ISKCON for example, and it has an impact on these groups which are newly founded in Central and Eastern Europe.⁵⁸

Similarity might be found in the fact that in this part of Europe, like in the West, new religions are accompanied by the growing activity of anti-cult movements and specific mass-media activity, stressing all elements which are sensational and controversial, non-objective in giving information and quite frequently – consciously or not – supporting anti-cult groups. Arguments used by anti-cults are the same here as elsewhere and, as Richardson pointed out analysing the report on “dangerous sects”, given in Poland by the Security Office, it “reads as if it were written by anti-cult groups from the West, and one cannot help but suspect that anti-cult literature and other such influences contributed to the development of this report.”⁵⁹ In Poland,

⁵⁶ Kolodny, A., Philipowitch, L.: *op cit*, p. 309.

⁵⁷ Barker, E.: *op cit*, p. 34

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Richardson, J.: *New Religions and Religious Freedom in Eastern and Central Europe*, p. 266.

four such well-organised anti-cult movements already existed in 1995.⁶⁰ Typical accusations formulated by them and repeated in newspapers and magazine publications include: brainwashing, mind control, taking property from new members, sexual abuse, taking drugs, kidnapping children, etcetera.⁶¹

Not only anti-cult movements, but also some politicians attempt to introduce legislative limitations and control of NRMs. Richardson and Kamaras analyse the activity of the Reverend Gáza Nemeth, a prominent minister of Reformed Church of Hungary, who many times in different forms attacked new religions, finally organising an anti-cult group, which published a pamphlet on NRMs in 1992.⁶² In an answer to this, the Hare Krishna reacted and won the case in the Hungarian court. Kamaras offers an analysis of Nemeth's hostility towards NRMs, wondering not only about the reaction of the opponents of NRMs but also about their reasons.⁶³ In a broader context, his considerations prove that the image of NRMs and of Hare Krishnas, specifically, has become much more positive in the years following the collapse of Communism. In 1993, 82% of articles concerning ISKCON published in Hungarian newspapers were neutral-objective and only 9% negative, a reduction from 20% in 1992.⁶⁴

These changes could be interpreted optimistically as a good result of lessons of democracy that are taken in Central Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, the picture is still dominated by black-white dichotomy or, in other words, by the division of "us" and "them". The question put by Barker in her chapter, "But Who's Going to Win?," seems to be relevant to the lack of consciousness of pluralism and its acceptance in all post-Communist countries.

⁶⁰ Grzymała-Moszczyńska, H.: *Anti-Cult Movements*, p. 385.

⁶¹ For further details see Richardson, J.: *op cit*, p. 264-265.

⁶² *Op cit*, p. 269.

⁶³ Kamaras, I.: *Derotees of Krishna in Hungary*, p. 328.

⁶⁴ *Op cit*, p. 330.

Eileen Barker

BUT WHO'S GOING TO WIN? NATIONAL AND MINORITY RELIGIONS IN POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETY¹

Few of us are likely ever to forget the faces of East Berliners rushing through the gaps that they made in the Berlin Wall in the winter of 1989. We were watching history being made. The people, tired of the tyrannies of socialism, were making a gesture which symbolised far more than crossing a geographical boundary that had been erected to contain them within the socialist regime. They were crossing social, political, and economic boundaries into a whole new world of possibilities. And they were breaking free from an atheistic jurisdiction that had suppressed the manifestation of religion.

But while the East Berliners were euphoric that they at last had the opportunity to enter the West – to visit relatives, to look at the shops and glimpse the materialistic rewards of capitalism and, above all, to experience the promise of freedom from fear and oppression, there were also those who waited, some of them literally as the Wall came tumbling down, to rush in the opposite direction – into the East – with their material and spiritual wares.

¹ I would like to thank the Hibbert Trust which first encouraged me to go to Eastern Europe with a tape recorder, and contributed to the expenses of my initial post-Communist visits to Romania, Hungary, Poland, and what was then still Czechoslovakia. I would also like to thank the British Academy which contributed to my expenses for research into changes in new religions, which included a number of visits to Eastern Europe.

I. The New Religions from the West

The opening of new opportunities

By 1989, there were several hundred, possibly as many as two or three thousand, distinguishable new religions in the West – if the term “new religions” is defined widely enough to include new age and human potential groups and new manifestations within some of the mainstream religions. But, despite this large number of *movements*, the number of fully committed *members* was somewhat less impressive. Several movements had only a score or so core participants, and even the better-known movements such as the Unification Church, the Church of Scientology, ISKCON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness), and The Family had only a few hundred core members in any country in Western Europe or even North America.² One reason for this relative paucity of membership was that, although several thousands might have joined a new religion for a short period, the majority had become disillusioned or decided that they no longer wanted what the movement could offer them, and had simply left.³

Moreover, although membership numbers were being augmented by the birth of the second and, in some cases, even a third generation, the pool of potential converts seemed to be drying up. Exposés and attacks by the anti-cult movement and the media, a general inclination to lump every alternative new religion into an ill-defined category of “destructive cults”, and rapidly changing economic and social circumstances had all contributed to a general cessation in growth, if not to an overall decline in numbers. The opening up of an as-yet-untapped arena with millions of religiously and spiritually starved persons, who had been left in an ideological vacuum by the collapse of Marxism, was an opportunity not to be missed.

² For a discussion of problems related to definitions and counting the numbers of movements and members, see Barker 1989 Appendix II.

³ This high turnover rate makes the popularly held contention that members of the new religions have been subjected to irresistible and irreversible mind control techniques rather difficult to uphold.

Indeed, overcoming communism and spreading their Truths to those who were separated from the West by the atheistic iron curtain of socialism had long been a goal of many of the more evangelically oriented religions, whether they were mainstream Protestants from North America or the new religious movements that had emerged in the West or arrived there from Asia. Not that these religions had been entirely quiescent during the Soviet period. It was well known that Baptists and other Evangelical organisations were systematically smuggling Bibles into the Soviet Union. Less well-known perhaps was the fact that the Unification Church's Scripture, *The Divine Principle*, declares that if its "Godism" was unable to overcome the Satanic ideology of Marxism through ideological suasion, then the godly, democratic West would have to resort to a Third World War (Moon 1973: 490ff). Furthermore, many of the more "multi-national" of the new religions have long had the odd member in Central and Eastern Europe and, indeed, in areas of the Soviet Union, but for obvious reasons, they were for the most part, working underground, risking deportation and/or imprisonment – several enjoyed the hospitality of Soviet jails, and some Krishna devotees, like many devout Orthodox and Catholic priests, had died while imprisoned.⁴

Just as earlier generations of Christians and Muslims, in the belief that the One True Faith had to be universalised, have resorted to the conquest of new regions around the world, so now religions old and new were developing ideological concepts of globalisation and multi-national structures within which they could spread their Truth. While in the years leading up to 1989 several of the movements were predicting that communism was floundering, once the dramatic events associated with the fall of the Wall occurred, many declared that it was they who were responsible for its downfall – one had only to ask a Moonie, a Krishna devotee, a Transcendental Meditator, a Sahaja Yoga, or a Scientologist whether they believed

⁴ It should, however, be noted that by no means all alternative religions were underground or even suppressed. In the mid-1980s, for example, I was able to visit a number of small Buddhist groups and other new religions which were functioning without much problem in Poland.

their movement had any role to play in the destruction of the Wall and they would have expressed surprise that you did not realise that they had played *the* role. Had it not been for their leaders' intervention, their prayers, their chanting, their meditation, their demonstrations, their secret negotiation – or God's pleasure at their endeavours – the Wall would still be there.

The euphoria was intense. But it was not long before the honeymoon was over. As the 1990s progressed, economic depression, rising unemployment, anomie, and alienation soon set in. The very freedoms that had been longed for turned out to be all too elusive or empty rhetoric – the desire for “freedom for all” turned into the quest for “freedom for me”; but in practice seemed to result merely in “freedom for them”. Disillusionment grew as the free markets in economics, politics, and religion enabled a few (the omnipotent, omnipresent “mafia”) to become rich and powerful, while others (the vast majority) became far poorer, lacking even the security and opportunities they had enjoyed under socialism. How did the new religions fit into this depressing situation?

The diversity

There have, of course, been new religions throughout history – Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism were all new religions at one time. Perhaps the first and most important point that should be made about the NRMs is that one cannot generalise about them. Furthermore, the present wave of new religions in Europe, unlike earlier waves, is not restricted to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Not only do the movements draw on Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Shinto, and Pagan sources, they also draw on the psycho-analytic ideas of Freud and Jung, on political ideologies, on science fiction, and UFOlogy. Some claim to be returning to the pristine origins of their tradition – Krishna devotees trace their lineage of Vaishnava Hinduism through an unbroken chain of spiritual masters, most notably the sixteenth-century monk, Lord Chaitanya, to Lord Krishna himself; members of Soka Gakkai chant the mantra revealed by the thirteenth-century Buddhist monk, Nichiren Daishonin; members of The Family explain that they attempt to live their lives according to the precepts laid down in the New Testament

Acts of the Apostles. Others, such as the Aetherius Society, the Raelians, and the Church of Scientology, claim to have revealed radically new truths about other worlds and Beings who have been, heretofore, unknown to the human race. Yet others, such as Damanhur or Aumism,⁵ present syncretistic or eclectic combinations of a variety of ideas and practices from the myriad different traditions available in the contemporary supermarket of religion and spirituality. Some movements, such as the Unification Church, offer a systematic theology addressing most of the basic issues that have, traditionally, been addressed by mainstream Christianity (an eschatology, a theodicy, a soteriology, a Christology, an interpretation of history, and an account of creation). Other movements seem to have no obviously coherent system of beliefs, but a motley collection of ideas which may contradict each other and change at the whim of a charismatic leader such as Bhagwan Rajneesh or, as he later became known, Osho. Some beliefs are written into a theological treatise; some are captured on cassettes or videos; others are passed on by word of mouth.

The new religions differ also in the wide variety of rituals and practices in which they engage. These include formal liturgy, chanting, meditation, prayer, a vast range of types of yoga, song, fasting, silence, channelling, trance, and other altered states of consciousness, which may be induced by hallucinogenic drugs, the drums of a shaman, or fervent dance. Some members of new religions live with each other in rural or urban communes; others live in semi-detached houses or apartment blocks by themselves or with their immediate family. Some members work full-time for their organisation; others work on a part-time voluntary basis; yet others work only in the "outside world". Attitudes towards sex range from the group "love-in" of the Rajneeshee neo-Sannyasin and the "flirty fishing" of the erstwhile "hookers for Jesus" in the Children of God, to a celebration of celibacy by the Brahma Kumaris, and the restriction of sexual intercourse to the pro-

⁵ Aumism, the Religion of Unity, founded by Hamsah Manarah in France in 1969 should not be confused with Aum Shinrikyo, founded by Shoko Asahara in Japan in 1987.

creation of children within marriage for Krishna devotees. Other movements, such as Scientology, have no particular teaching regarding sexual practices. Attitudes towards women, children, and socialisation vary enormously, as do rules about food, alcohol, tobacco, and drugs.

Some new religions are rich, some are poor, some have rich leaders and poor followers. The rich founder of the Brahma Kumaris gave his wealth to the women whom he placed in charge of the movement. Money may be acquired by asking for donations or by selling goods in public places, by tithing, by members handing over their property, by running businesses, by charging followers or "clients" for courses, and/or by collecting social security and other state benefits. Members of new religions may be young or old; black, white or any ethnic group; they may be well-educated or poorly educated; rich or poor; or from a religious, agnostic, or atheistic background. Leaders may be seen as Messiahs, gods, teachers, prophets, gurus, channelers, and/or friends. The organisation of the movement may be totalitarian, authoritarian, theocratic, bureaucratic and/or democratic; it may be more or less open or secretive; it may have any number of levels of membership; it may be small and confined to one geographical location; or it may be a multi-national organisation spread throughout the world. The effect of the movement on individual members and on society as a whole may be harmful or it may be benign.

But not only are there differences *between* new religions, there are also differences *within* the movements. It should be obvious enough, but is surprisingly often forgotten, that a new religion in California in the late 1960s is unlikely to exhibit the same characteristics as the same movement in a post-Socialist country in the 1990s. There will, of course, be some continuity with the past, but for people in Central and Eastern Europe to turn to media stories of the late 1960s or early 1970s about Moonies, Scientologists, Krishna devotees, or the Children of God in San Francisco, London, Paris, or Sydney in order to understand what the movements are like in Budapest, Sofia, Kiev, or Kraków in the late 1990s is as silly as drawing merely on stories selected from their childhood or even their romantic adolescence if one wants to understand what a prosperous businessman, a

successful politician, a revered bishop, a feared Mafioso, or a doting grandmother is like today. There will be *some* recognisable similarities, but there will also be highly significant differences. They are likely to have adapted to the changing circumstances of the social situations in which they have found themselves, and it is probable that they will have matured, left behind, or radically transformed youthful enthusiasms and ideals, learned from past mistakes, and, perhaps, developed new follies or indiscretions. The analogy may be extended to distinguish three pertinent points.

Characteristics of new religions

First, adolescents share certain characteristics just because they are adolescents. Similarly, there are characteristics to be found in a significant number of new religions merely because they are *new* and because they are *religious*. Such characteristics have been described in detail elsewhere (Barker 1989; Wilson 1990) but, briefly stated, include the fact that, when first started, the movements are almost invariably small in number, and interaction (socialisation and control) is generally carried out at a face-to-face level. The founder is frequently accorded a charismatic authority by his or her followers and, being unbound by either tradition or rules, may be highly unpredictable, changing direction at a moment's notice. The membership itself, consisting as it does of first-generation converts, tends to be far more enthusiastic and committed than a membership born into a traditional religion. It is also likely to consist of an atypical representation of society; many of the new religions that appeared in the West around the 1960s appealed disproportionately to young middle-class people (in late adolescence, their twenties or early thirties) with excellent health, relatively little experience, and few dependents or other responsibilities. A further characteristic of new religions is that they tend to exhibit a greater clarity and decisiveness in their position than older religions, which have often had to accommodate generations of changing members and circumstances. New religions tend, for example, to draw a relatively sharp theological or ideological distinction between Truth and Falsehood; a relatively sharp moral distinction between Good and Bad, Right and Wrong; and a relatively sharp

social distinction between Us (the community of believers) and Them (all others, including, sometimes, members of one's family who do not share the movement's beliefs).⁶ Finally, throughout history, new religions have been viewed with suspicion and frequently discriminated against by the society to which they provide an alternative world-view and, sometimes, lifestyle.

Temporal differences within a new religion

Secondly, as adolescents grow up and shed the characteristics of adolescence, they are likely to become increasingly different from each other. Similarly, new religions become older religions and develop in ways that are increasingly different from each other. The changes that the characteristics outlined above are liable to undergo within a period of twenty years or so have also been described in more detail elsewhere (Barker 1995a; 1995b). Here it might be pointed out merely that some movements grow and others fade away altogether. In the process, not only are converts liable to lose at least some of their initial enthusiasms as they themselves mature, but a whole new second generation of members may be born into the movement, demanding the allocation of such scarce resources as time and money, and, in all likelihood, questioning and modifying some of the movement's more salient tenets and practices.

Temporal differences between new religions

Thirdly, as one cohort of adolescents passes into adulthood, another cohort of adolescents takes its place. Similarly, as new religions are transformed into older religions, further waves of newer new religions appear on the scene.⁷ Post-Communist societies now play host both to "old new"

⁶ None of this is unique to the current wave of new religions. Most of these characteristics are to be found among the early Christians, Muslims, and other religions. Jesus, for example, stressed the divisive nature of his mission more than once – see Luke 14:26 and Matthew 10:35-6.

⁷ The Japanese, who experienced their "Rush Hour of the Gods" (McFarland 1967) immediately after the Second World War, now refer to religions, such as Aum Shinrikyo, that have appeared since 1970 as "New New Religions" (Shimazono 1995).

religions from the West, which are well into their second-generation membership, *and* to indigenous “new new” religions, several of which may have sprung up since the Wall fell down: The New Jerusalem in Romania, The Church of the Last Testament followers of Vissarion, and the White Brotherhood followers of Maria Devi Khrystos are all examples.⁸

II. The Foreign New Religions in Post-Communist Societies

The new hybrid

What is interesting, sociologically speaking, about the “foreign” new religions in post-communist societies is that they are typical neither of “new new” religions (whether they have originated there since the fall of the Wall, or have appeared in the West in the 1960s and 1970s), nor yet of the latter group of movements as they are in the West today. They appear in Central and Eastern Europe as a special hybrid, exhibiting characteristics drawn from both first- and subsequent-generation movements.

While recognising the great variety between the movements, one can observe that the new religions which are foreign to post-Communist societies have a membership that consists of native young converts *and* a leadership of more seasoned and experienced members who may have been in their movement for twenty or more years and who no longer exhibit the youthful enthusiasms they once displayed.⁹ There is not space here to go into detail

⁸ This White Brotherhood should be distinguished from the longer established White Brotherhood following the teachings of Peter Deunov/Beinsa Duno in Bulgaria, which could be classified as an “old new” religion that has, interestingly, reversed the flow that concerns us here by having spread from Eastern Europe to the West. One can, however, discern some overlap in the beliefs of these movements and various other White Brotherhood communities in the West (such as Elizabeth Clare Prophet’s Church Universal and Triumphant, and Ananda Tara Shan’s Ananda Ashram in Denmark) and older religions such as Guy Ballard’s “I AM” Religious Activity and Madame Blavatsky’s Theosophy.

⁹ It should be noted that several of the movements now have native leaders at national and local levels, and that some of these may have been members of their movement during the communist period – possibly operating underground, or while living in Western countries.

about the difference that this combination makes, but a few points may be noticed. The missionary leaders from the West will have learned some of the pitfalls of being a member of a minority religion – for example, they are more likely to encourage the native converts to keep in touch with their families, rather than cutting themselves off – as they themselves might have done some twenty years before. The distinction between members and non-members is unlikely to be as sharp as it had been in the movement's early days. It is easier for students to continue studying and the employed to continue to work in "outside" jobs and to lead lives that are not as radically different from the rest of society as they might be in a "new new" religion. But in so far as the *new* members are *converts*, they, like converts to any religion (be it new or old), will appear to have undergone radical changes and to be far more enthusiastic about their new-found beliefs than those born into a religion.

The foreign new religions will, almost by definition, be multi-national and have their international headquarters several thousands of miles away. New converts are unlikely to know the founders personally – indeed several of the charismatic leaders who inspired the reverence of early followers are now dead, and their organisations have become increasingly "rationalised" and predictable.¹⁰ Communication from the top is not likely to be face-to-face – it may well be mediated (in English or some other western language) through electronic media. ISKCON has, for example, an extremely well-developed international network that allows information to be distributed throughout the world by e-mail; it is, thereby, able to mobilise resources at almost a moment's notice, alerting and informing not only its own mem-

¹⁰ The founders of four of the five best-known movements in the 1970s and 1980s, have died: Prabhupada (1896-1977), founder of ISKCON; L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986), founder of Scientology; David Berg (1919-1994), founder of The Family/Children of God; and Osho (1931-1990), founder of the Rajneeshee movement. Sun Myung Moon (1920-) is still controlling the Unification Church as an innovative and unpredictable charismatic leader, although a considerable amount of bureaucracy and tradition has been established within the movement.

bership but also non-members in the media, governments, and elsewhere about actions that might violate its interests, and possibly those of other religions.¹¹ A related development that is not confined to post-Communist societies, but which has emerged since the Wall came down and which is affecting the character of some new religions in Central and Eastern Europe as elsewhere, is the use of private discussion groups on restricted-access internet sites by fringe or marginal members who are disillusioned in some way with their new religion and who exchange critical information that is not under the control of the movement's leadership (Barker 1997).

The new religions in the West appealed, and to some extent still do appeal, disproportionately to young people who have not been either socially, economically, or politically disadvantaged, but who might claim that they have been spiritually oppressed. On the other hand, those whom the movements attract in post-Communist societies can claim, not only to have been brought up in a spiritual vacuum, but also to have suffered from relatively severe economic and perhaps social and political oppression. Consequently, one finds that many of those from Central and Eastern Europe who are attracted to the new religions wish to *espouse* the very rewards of capitalism – consumerism and materialism – from which the Western membership wanted to *escape*.

The new social environment

The media and the anti-cult movements in the West had to start almost from scratch when the present wave of post-war new religions appeared on the scene.¹² By now, however, both have amassed a large stock of negative

¹¹ By such means, a number of students of religion in Central and Eastern Europe have first learned of incidents such as the attacks on the Krishna Temple in Yerevan (see below), legal proceedings in Russia, and draft legislation in Hungary or the Ukraine.

¹² There was some anti-cult activity concerned with, for example, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. This, however, tended to be more counter-cult than anti-cult; that is, it was more intent on revealing theological error than anti-social practices (Introvigne 1995).

stories about new religions in the West, and these are passed with a missionary fervour (not dissimilar to that of some of the new religions themselves) to the media and anti-cult movements on the Eastern side of the Wall. But while the hostility that the new religions have experienced in the West has been largely, although not exclusively, due to their being new and their questioning the social and political status quo (the Vietnam war, bourgeois imperialism, and/or materialistic rat-race), the hostility that is extended to the new religions in Central and Eastern Europe is more likely to be because, as I shall elaborate somewhat below, the movements are perceived as foreign, a threat to the security of the country, and in direct competition with the traditional, national religions.

Another important factor to be noted is that the new religions in the West emerged in what might be termed a more or less secularizing pluralism (Roof 1995). On crossing the Wall, however, they found themselves facing populations that had inherited a Marxist legacy. Here I refer not primarily to a legacy of Marxism – in fact, there were remarkably few who succumbed to the ideological socialisation of Soviet times. Few would admit (except in public) that they believed in Marxism, and remarkably few knew much beyond the basic tenets of Marxist ideology – it has, indeed, been said with some truth that there could have been more Marxists in the West than in the Soviet Union.

But the populations of communist states, like those brought up in any fundamentalist or sectarian religion, had been taught to believe that The Truth existed. They might not have accepted that The Truth was Marxism, but they were, nonetheless, inclined to believe that The Truth was waiting to be discovered. And, again like those brought up in fundamentalist or sectarian faiths, they had had inculcated into them from an early age that there were sharp and crucially significant distinctions to be drawn between “them” and “us”. The “them” might be the bourgeois, capitalist imperialists of the West, or they might be, and increasingly had become, members of their own state apparatus. Either way, “they” tended to be homogeneously synonymous with “bad” and “we” with “good”.

There were and still are, of course, enormous differences between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. While Poland is almost entirely Catholic, the erstwhile Czechoslovakia has been home to Hussites, Lutheran Brethren, Jews, and numerous other small and not so small religious communities alongside its Catholic population. As already intimated, there were several evangelical religions and new religions, mainly (but by no means only) from the West, which converted Soviet citizens to their faith. Most religious diversity before 1989 was, however, due largely to the *ethnic* diversity that had resulted from the historical contingencies of migration, military occupations, and the redrawing of boundaries by the Byzantine, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian Empires, and a multitude of wars, including the two World Wars of the twentieth century. Thus, Hungarian Unitarians, Lutherans, and Greek Catholics, are to be found living among the Romanian Orthodox in Transylvania; Muslims, Catholics, and Greek Orthodox are to be found in Albania; and Russia has long embraced a wide variety of ethnic groups, each preserving its own religious tradition as best as it can.¹³ But for a sizable proportion of the population, pluralism, in the sense of a peaceful coexistence of alternative religions, has been, and for many remains, an alien concept.

It was in the mid-1980s that I first became aware of the extent to which the concept of pluralism might present a problem to countries unfamiliar with even the dubious kinds of democracy that are to be found in the West. I was giving a lecture on religion in Western Europe and North America at the University of Warsaw. Question time came, and a member of the audience stood up. "This idea of pluralism in the West is very interesting," he said, "but who's going to win?" I assumed that the translation of the lecture had not been very successful, but when I gave roughly the

¹³ A curious twist in history is to be found in 1971 when, for reasons of political expediency, the Muslims of Bosnia were declared not to be a religious, but a national, community.

same talk in Krakow a few days later, I got exactly the same question: "Yes, but who's going to win?"

Today, some ten years later – after a decade that celebrated the collapse of the Berlin Wall, witnessed the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, acclaimed the introduction of democracy and suffered the bloody murders and ethnic cleansing of the former Republic of Yugoslavia – a prevailing question has remained: "Which of the many competing religions or ideologies on offer is to win?"

The battle has commenced. In this paper the focus is not exclusively, or even primarily, on the literal and tragic battles that have taken place in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, nor on the dubious roles that the religious institutions – be they Catholic, Orthodox, or Muslim – played in that process. What I concentrate on is a very general discussion of how, to a greater or lesser extent, in the other post-Communist countries – at the social, if not at the military, level – there are continuing tensions that would seem to militate against, rather than contribute to, societal integration. Such tensions can be found both between the various religions, and between religious institutions and other sections of society.

III. Problems Facing the Traditional Churches

In almost every country, the main protagonist claiming the *right* "to win" is the Mother or National Church. During the Soviet period these were, to a greater or lesser extent, oppressed: in Albania they were completely suppressed; in Poland, uniquely, the Catholic Church was able to attract believers (and even unbelievers) to mass each Sunday, and was, in a number of ways, able to provide an important alternative to the socialist state. But with the collapse of socialism all the traditional religions were confronted (again, to varying degrees) with a number of pressing problems. Many have been treated with suspicion because of their actual or perceived collaboration with the socialist regime. Sometimes this was with good reason; but there were plenty of instances of priests and other believers suffering persecution and, as mentioned earlier, even dying for their faith.

The anti-religious socialisation of the population may not always have produced virulent atheists (in fact, one can find remarkably little in the way of successfully implanted antagonism towards the opiate of the people – far less than the anti-clericalism that one could have come across in sections of France or Italy, for example); but state socialism had produced generations of persons unversed in the basic tenets of the Bible, with little or no knowledge of their religious traditions and rituals, and unfamiliar with religious or spiritual concepts with which to explore the transcendent.

Throughout the 1990s, the traditional Churches have faced a serious demographic imbalance, with the majority of priests being either elderly survivors or young seminarians, both tending to be inexperienced and/or unsophisticated in matters of economics, politics, and leadership. Furthermore, the Churches have tended to have little experience in developing a practical theology – the Orthodox Churches have traditionally concentrated on the liturgy as a carrier of ethnic identity, and by 1989 the Catholic Churches, having, on the whole, remained relatively unaffected by the radical changes of the Second Vatican Council, tended to be staunchly conservative, with little to offer in the way of answers to issues of current concern for their flock (although abortion has become a hot issue that many of the Churches are now debating). So far as pastoral questions or social services were concerned, these had become defined, especially in urban areas, as tasks for the state; and even when clergy may want to help, few have been trained in social welfare or counselling skills, and most people are just not used to looking to the Churches for this kind of assistance. But perhaps the lack of experience and training has been particularly noticeable in areas such as teaching and evangelism; untrained priests may be ridiculed by school children; and secular teachers, who may suddenly be asked to teach religious education, tend not only to be uneducated in religious knowledge, but also disinclined to take on a new subject which holds little interest for them.

And, like the vast majority of their members, many of the Churches are poor. Most clergy have to survive on pitifully low salaries; much of the Churches' property was confiscated; churches may have been converted into a swimming pool, a storehouse for potatoes, a hospital, or an orphanage.

Disputes over the restitution and the restoration of these and other capital assets,¹⁴ may become particularly acrimonious when there are two or more claims for the same building or piece of land if the hospital or orphanage is forced to move to a worse location or to close down altogether. The Church can become defined as uncaring, greedy, and more concerned with itself and its secular interests than with the plight of the poor and needy. In Poland before 1989, one frequently heard the phrase “the Church and us against them”; now one is as likely to hear the phrase “the Church and them against us”.

Given these and a myriad other problems, it is not surprising that the traditional Churches bitterly resent the incursion into their territory of foreign religions – particularly American evangelical Protestants and NRMs. This resentment becomes particularly acute when the foreign missionaries demonstrate their undoubted superiority in teaching, in evangelising and, above all, in drawing on an apparently bottomless reserve of financial resources.

Competition from alternative religions

All is not fair in love and pluralism. The foreign missionaries are, the National Churches’ argument goes, bribing our flock – the flock that rightly belongs to us. If a father has been imprisoned, is it not right that once he is released he should be allowed to have his own children returned to him? Why should foster parents be allowed to steal them from us? “The Jehovah’s Witnesses (the Mormons, the Moonies, the Baptists) are very rich,” the traditional Churches complain. “They promise the poor ‘if you join us, we’ll help you with money to start up a small business’ – they are *buying* souls.”

And it is not merely filthy lucre with which the foreign missionaries lure the flock. They can bring employment – the Mormons have set up a thriving cement plant in the Republic of Armenia. As mentioned earlier,

¹⁴ The Catholic Church in Slovenia is, for example, fighting a complicated battle over restoration of vast areas of forest that it once owned.

Bibles had been smuggled through the Iron Curtain for many years, but once the Wall came down, not only Bibles, but whole rainforests of literature swamped the literature-starved peoples on the other side (people queuing was an all-too-familiar sight during the socialist period, but the longest queues I ever saw in Soviet Prague were on Thursdays when the books came out). Literally as the Wall was being pulled down, the Scientologists were there, handing out their literature to the East Germans. Soon they were to be found in other post-socialist societies, promoting courses on *How to Improve your Communication Abilities* and all manner of other skills necessary for the aspiring capitalist; purification courses were offered to counteract industrial pollution and the after-effects of Chernobyl. Unificationists organised trips to the West for students and those who were likely to occupy positions of leadership in the future; they held conferences on a number of subjects in comfortable hotels in the Crimea (now they are more likely to invite those who can pay themselves for the privilege to partake in one of their mass "Blessings"); and, perhaps most seductively of all, they have sent volunteers from the West to give free or greatly subsidised English lessons. Transcendental Meditators offer Transcendental Meditation; Sahaja Yoga offers instant enlightenment through the awakening of the kundalini; ISKCON devotees offer Krishna consciousness, and Food for Life frequently feeds undernourished and starving peoples whom most of the rest of the world had abandoned in war zones such as Bosnia, Chechnya, and Ngorno Karabagh (until they were thrown out for "threatening to undermine national solidarity").¹⁵

The new Churches that depend on American Prosperity theologians (such as Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland) have grown apace. One can, for example, attend a meeting of about 6,000 young and not-so-young members of the Hungarian Faith Church in a large sports stadium on the outskirts of Budapest, or a gathering of the Church of Truth in an open-air

¹⁵ In Poland, a concerned priest told me how he spent a lot of his valuable time persuading Catholics that it was better for them to starve than break the first Commandment by consuming food that had been offered to pagan idols.

venue just outside Yerevan. In both places, members of the congregation will be dressed in their Sunday best and, one after another, grateful converts with shining eyes will witness as to how they have succeeded in their careers, and turned from poverty to, at least relative, riches once they had taken Jesus into their hearts. Just as in parts of Latin America and Africa, the so-called "Happy Clappies"¹⁶ are offering the message of Jesus' love with the promise of Health and Wealth – and a not insignificant number of people are certainly accepting the offer and prospering.¹⁷

Many of the foreign missionaries have, moreover, not only experience in teaching and proselytising, but also access to expensive technology with which they can communicate their message to tens of thousands or more at a time. Buying prime time on radio and beaming satellite television from outer space are but some of the more obvious resources at their disposal.

IV. Diversity of Responses to the Religious Situation

The *supply* of alternative religions in Central and Eastern Europe is undoubtedly there. But availability of foreign goods does not necessarily mean that the *demand* is high. In an attempt to illustrate the diversity that may be found between individuals in their receptivity to the religious alternatives available in the religious supermarket, this section sketches a range of ideal typical positions that can be found in post-Communist societies. It also hypothesises briefly about the relationships that might be found between motivating interests and attitudes towards both the National/Mother Church and the alternative religions.

It needs to be stressed that the descriptions are ideal types in the Weberian sense (Weber 1949). That is, they are not intended to reflect an actual reality, but rather to provide an analytical tool for comparative purposes. It is possible, indeed probable, that few individuals will be precisely

¹⁶ A name popularly ascribed to those who joyfully clap with their hands in the air while singing their praises to Jesus and the Lord.

¹⁷ Several of these congregations have close connections with Ulf Ekman's Word of Life Church (*Livets Ord*) in Uppsala, Sweden.

portrayed by any one type; most are liable to straddle two or more types.¹⁸ But it is hoped that the logic of the relationships between the different positions represented in Table I will be recognisable – at least to the extent that they may form the basis for empirical testing by further research into: (a) the relative composition of membership of the different types both within and between different societies, and (b) the reliability of the hypothesised relationship between an individual's religious position, the motivating interests associated with that position, and his or her attitude towards both the Mother/traditional Church and alternative religions.¹⁹

¹⁹ Obviously such a tool would not be useful if it bore little or no relation to reality. The types have been culled from my own research over the past decade or so, which has involved numerous visits to the traditionally Christian post-Communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe and the FSU, and literally hundreds of interviews with a wide range of people of all ages and a vast variety of backgrounds. To take examples almost at random, interviews and discussions have included those with school teachers in Tallinn and school children in Jablonec, a chemist in Szeged, a psychologist in Bratislava, university students in East Berlin, missionaries in Budapest, a tourist guide in Split, aid-workers in Yerevan, a gynaecologist in Dilizhan, a sculptor in Ashtarak, an immunologist in Kraków, an actor in Prague, a piano teacher in Stepanakert, an artist in Tirane, a musician in Oradea, secretaries in Ostrig, a psychiatrist in Kiev, a farmer in Artashat, earthquake survivors in Gumri, human rights activists in Sofia, political activists in Moscow, a folklorist in Bucharest, an army commander in Aghdam, soldiers in military helicopters, pensioners in parks, workers in factories, shop assistants in shops, peasants in fields and peasants in markets, statisticians in Warsaw, post-modern vampires in Bistria, seminarians in St. Petersburg, a Hussite priest in Baroun, a Unitarian Bishop in Cluj, Archbishops in Maramure, the Catholicos in Etzmiadzin and, it sometimes seemed, politicians, journalists, clergy, and social scientists just about everywhere. I have enjoyed the hospitality of countless people, and have stayed in modest village dwellings, magnificent urban mansions and, most frequently of all, faceless Soviet apartment blocks on the outskirts of a variety of anonymous conurbations.

¹⁸ Should any readers of this paper be interested in conducting such research, I would be happy to coordinate their activities, if only by putting them in touch with other interested researchers so that they can use comparable indices. I can be contacted c/o The London School of Economics, Houghton St., London, WC2A 2AE, England.

Table 1

Ideal type positions and attitudes hypothesising an ideal typical motivating interest associated with an individual's religious and his/her consequent attitude towards the Mother/National Church and towards alternative religions

Religious position		Motivating interest	Attitude towards	
			Mother Church	Competition
Continuing attender		Religious	+	—
Traditionalist		Nationalist	+	—
Atheist	(a)	Nationalist	+	—
	(b)	Religious (negative)	—	(—)
Pending-tray		Self/group betterment	(+)	(—)
Revivalist	internal	Religious	(+)	(—)
	external	Religious	(—)	+ & —
Belonger-not-believer	pre-1989	Group-betterment (national)	(+)	—
	post-1989	Self-betterment (nationalist)	+	—
Believer-not-belonger		Religious	(—)	(+)
Religious seeker		Religious	(—)	+
New Age seeker		Spiritual	—	(+)
Consumerist		Self-betterment	(—)	(+)

(Bracket indicates qualification)

“*Continuing attenders*” are people who went to Church during the socialist regime, and who have been and remain staunch supporters of the National Church. Such people are typically to be found in rural areas; an obvious example is the *babushka*,²⁰ but the category would also include

²⁰ This Russian word, meaning a headscarf tied under the chin, is commonly used to refer to an elderly woman or “grandmother” – who may well have taken her grandchildren to the Church and kept alive the traditional religious culture in an otherwise atheistic household during the soviet regime.

priests, monks, nuns, and other religious professionals. Such people are likely to be primarily motivated by deep feelings of religious devotion that are irrevocably connected to a cultural heritage which has been sustained throughout the years by the Mother Church. Any competition, particularly from newfangled foreign movements, is likely to be seen as anathema by the continuing attender.

"Traditionalists" are less likely to be motivated by religious devotion than by the importance of upholding the cultural heritage of the nation. For them, the continuing identity of the nation is well-nigh inconceivable without the Mother Church. Their sentiments are similar to those of the continuing attender, but of prime importance is preservation of their culture by the Church which they must loyally support, rather than their adherence to any particular dogma or their performance of any sacred ritual. Clearly alternative religions, especially those of foreign origin, will be seen as a threat both to individual identity and to the survival of the nation.

"Atheists" are typically drawn from those who were brought up and socialised by the socialist regime and had reached at least early middle-age by the end of the 1980s. They are likely to affirm that they have not needed religion in the past and do not need it now. They can be subdivided into two separate categories, the first of which overlaps with the previous category of *"traditionalists"* (who are likely to pay at least lipservice to the existence of a God). The second category is more religiously – or, rather, anti-religiously – motivated. Here one might find staunch Marxist-Leninists who believe that religion is a dangerous man-made opiate that is responsible for upholding the bourgeois ideologies of states and the false consciousness of the masses. Although ideologically against all religion, such atheists might not be fervently against alternative religions on the grounds that they see them as an (albeit dubious) alternative to the relatively powerful traditional Churches. They may also offer them limited support on the grounds of the equality of rights for all citizens.

Those in the *"pending-tray"* category tend to regard religion as a luxury for which they have no time at present. The economic situation takes up all their time and attention. Perhaps, they will explain, when they are not

so overburdened with securing basic necessities for themselves and their immediate family, religious issues can be considered more carefully. In the meantime, they have nothing against the Mother Churches, which, they will say, probably deserve their support. The alternative religions tend, however, to be regarded with a not-very-well-articulated suspicion.

“Revivalists” are motivated by religious interests and can be found both within the Mother Churches and in alternative religions. The followers of Alexander Men could provide an example of “internal” revivalists within the Russian Orthodox Church. These are people whose primary allegiance is to the Mother Church, but who have doubts about the ways in which some of its leaders are tackling the present situation. Usually revivalists who identify with the National Church will try to introduce reform from within the organisation, but sometimes, as in the case of Bulgaria or, for different reasons, Ukraine, their activities will result in schism. Quite often, however, the “internal” revivalists are more or less liberal and open to ecumenical and even inter-faith dialogue. They do not necessarily condemn alternative religions merely because they are alternatives. Other, “external” revivalists, such as those who belong to American Evangelical religions, are eager to bring The Truth and salvation to every soul. While they may see other Churches as a hindrance to this goal, they may also perceive the wisdom of working with the National Churches. They are, however, unlikely to have a positive attitude towards other alternative religions (themselves excluded, of course), which some of their number may label as heretical or even of satanic origin.

“Belongers-not-believers” again fall into two sub-types. First there are those who, before the Wall came down, were motivated by anti-communist interests to support the National Church as an alternative ideology and structure. The obvious example here is Poland, where atheist parents would baptise their children, attend mass, and take part in various activities organised by or through the Catholic Church. They would not necessarily have a strong antipathy towards alternative religions, if only because they, too, were an alternative to the state apparatus. Post-1989 “belongers-not-believers” are more likely to be motivated by self-interest. Just as in the days of a communist regime, if one wished to progress or even stay relatively secure

in one's job and general circumstances, it was advisable to be a card-carrying member of the Communist Party, so, after the collapse of communism, it might be helpful to be seen to attend the "right" church to meet and associate with the "right" people in order to demonstrate that one was a true Christian supporter of the National Church. Clearly, any suggestion that one supported alternative religions, especially foreign and/or new religions, would not be advisable.²¹

"Believers-not-belongers" are religiously motivated. They are, *however*, disillusioned for one reason or another with the traditional Churches, although they may feel that, were the Churches to be reformed, that is where their true heart lies. Some will have decided to pray, read the Bible, and/or perform other acts of worship by themselves. Others may start up a small group – this was quite common in Hungary, and it was not unusual for the members of the base-communities to come from a number of different confessions.

"Religious seekers," like those in the previous category, are dissatisfied with the National Church and prepared to try out alternative answers to their religious questions. Sometimes persons falling into this category will join an alternative religion for a period, discovering a social environment, concepts, and perhaps, Biblical knowledge with which to develop their religious comprehension. After some time, however, they may find the alternative religion to be shallow or lacking the tradition that they feel to be part of their cultural heritage; they may then return to their National Church, having gained what they feel to be a sufficient religious understanding to benefit from whatever the Church can offer.

"New Age seekers" are not altogether dissimilar to the previous category, but their interest is likely to be more of a quest for spiritual enlightenment than knowledge or understanding of a religious tradition. Their attitude towards any kind of traditional organisation is liable to be one of

²¹ It is possible that being an assiduous "belonger-not-believer" no longer holds the importance it once held (in the early 1990s) for self advancement.

suspicion. Indeed, they are quite likely to be sceptical of all organisations and will be seeking for “the God within,” and ways to develop their “true selves,” rather than affiliation to any particular movement – although they may find themselves attracted to a new religion when its rhetoric of which promises freedom from the restraints of normal society (Barker 1995d).

“*Consumerists*” are motivated primarily by an interest in furthering their own careers or getting some other kind of benefit from whatever source is available. The National Churches are unlikely to offer them much that attracts their attention, but several alternative religions might. Mention has already been made of some of the secular inducements that alternative religions may offer – from straightforward financial support to English classes and courses in business management. Although involvement in an alternative religion for secular reasons may lead some consumerists to become attracted to its social or more religious offerings, most are likely to do as their counterparts in the West have tended to do; that is, to take what they can and then leave the movement behind them.

V. Religion and Nationalism

Examining the diversity on offer in the religious supermarket, and distinguishing between types of individual predispositions to the diversity may be a necessary part of our understanding of the situation *vis-a-vis* alternative religions in Central and Eastern Europe, but it is certainly not sufficient. One of the many other questions that must be asked concerns the relative strengths of the different religions and the kinds of obstacles confronting not only the Mother Churches, but also the alternative religions. Violence and legal restrictions are obvious methods of controlling any religion, and they have been and continue to be used in the fight to win the ideological battle. Less obvious, but possibly just as effective, are the more subtle weapons of negative images and labelling the opponent as a threat to not only individuals but the very fabric of society itself.

Pushed into a corner from all sides with, they believe, the odds stacked heavily against them, it is not surprising that the National Churches should

be fighting back. Many of them are actively seeking constitutional protection for themselves and strict control over other religions, particularly those from foreign lands. But many of them are also turning to nationalist sentiments in their appeals to members of their flock and their assertions of their right to claim them as their own. Increasingly the rhetoric within and without the National Churches is that to be a good – a *real* – Russian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Pole, Croatian, or Serbian, one has to be a member – or at least a supporter – of the National Church. “We the nation” and “we the Church” are one. “They” – the others – are beyond the pale; they are not merely heretics, they are traitors. The openness to such a position has already been intimated in the ideal types outlined above, with Table 1 (p. 44) indicating the importance of nationalism among the motivating interests listed in the second column. Perhaps the coincidence of religion and nationalism could be further illustrated with another story.

My landlady in Yerevan is a well-educated woman and one of the kindest people whom I know; she welcomes me as a long-lost daughter every year when I return to Armenia. One evening I returned home slightly later than usual and she asked where I had been.

“To the Hare Krishna temple,” I responded.

“Oh – they’re not Armenians,” she told me.

“Oh yes – they are,” I said.

“No they’re not,” she repeated.

“Yes they are,” I repeated.

“They’re *not*”

“Look,” I said, “they have all lived in Yerevan all their lives – they don’t speak any other language than Armenian – and their names all end in -ian.”

“They’re not Armenian. They’re not Christian.”

“Come off it,” I countered, “your children aren’t Christian – they’re atheists – aren’t they Armenian?”

“Yes of course they are,” she replied indignantly, “they’re Christian atheists.”

And that, it seemed, meant that they, unlike the Krishna devotees, were Armenian.

I was not entirely surprised to learn some weeks later that the temple I had visited had been desecrated; several of the devotees had been beaten up and their property stolen or destroyed. A few months later, the Krishna temple was once again desecrated. One of the devotees whom I later re-interviewed showed me a couple of photos that someone had taken shortly after – he had blood pouring down his head, other devotees were still in hospital. An official at the American Embassy confirmed his story for me.

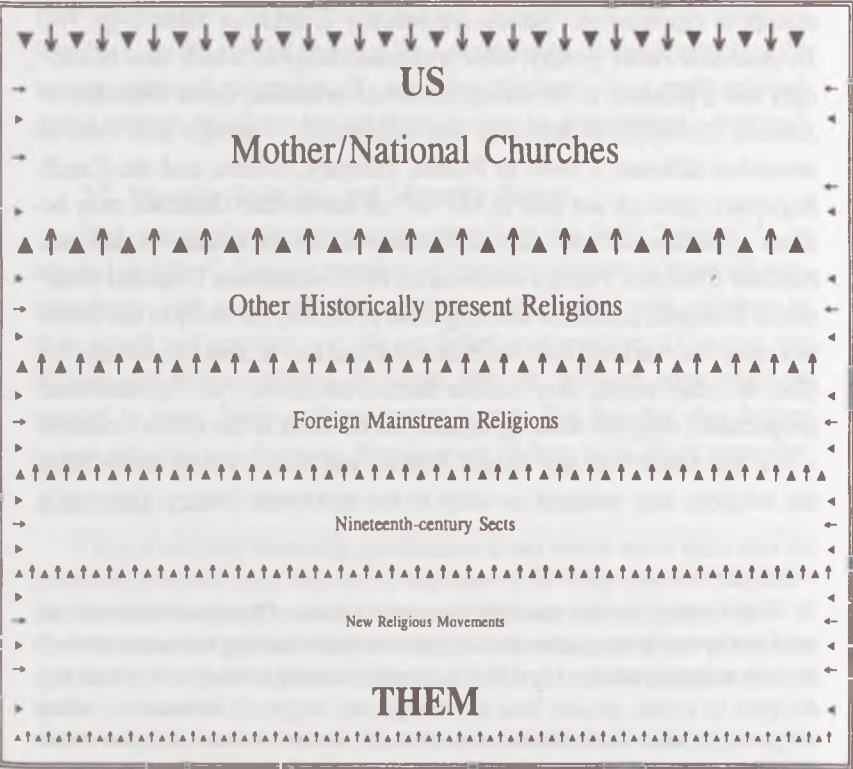
But this time it was not only Krishnas who had been attacked. In Moscow I spoke to a couple of young members of The Family (the erstwhile Children of God) who had taken seriously a threat to throw them from their twelfth floor balcony; they left the country. Indeed, it was not just the new religions that were attacked. American Baptists were not excluded; nor yet were some Armenian Protestants from the diaspora. Young para-militaries had broken into the homes and offices of almost all the religions in the country, apart, of course, from the National Church and the Mormons. When I asked the Yerevan Mormons how they had managed to escape, they told me it was because God was on their side, but somehow I suspected that the cement factory might have had more to do with it.

I questioned scores of Armenians about the incidents. A few were angry and ashamed. Some denied that such a thing had happened or could happen. But the majority (including politicians and clergy) said that, while it was a regrettable incident, members of these foreign religions were asking for trouble, and that it would be best for them and the country if they (including those treacherous Armenian citizens who were denying the traditional faith of all Armenians) were all to get out of the homeland as soon as possible.

Three points need to be recognised. First, these were certainly not *religious* fanatics; most of them never went to Church and were incapable of naming even one of the four Gospels. Secondly, they were not even vicious or unkind people. They were “normal,” decent people who knew merely that their country was under threat from foreign intrusions. Thirdly, this story has been told about Armenia, but variations could be told about

[Table 2 about here]

Table 2. IDEAL TYPICAL ATTITUDES OF RELIGIONS TOWARDS 'THEM' AND 'US'



Russians, Bulgarians, Serbians and various other nationals around the world.²² What has been illustrated is the conceptual manoeuvre, to be found in many countries, that defines the national, ethnic, and/or cultural “us” in terms of – or, perhaps, as coterminous with – the members or supporters of the National/Mother Churches. All others are relegated to the category of “them”.

But when one looks in more detail at religions other than the National Churches, there is a discernible pattern to their rhetoric which has a cumulative effect on the image of minority, and especially, new religions. An attempt to represent this pattern symbolically is made in Table 2 (p. 51). To generalise rather grossly, other traditional religions which have historically had a presence in the society (Muslims in Russia, Greek Orthodox in Albania, Unitarians in Romania, and occasionally – though their case is somewhat different – Jews in Poland, Hungary, Russia, and the Czech Republic) although not part of the “us” of the Mother Churches, may be heard to define “us” not just as themselves, but as themselves *and* the National Churches. Foreign missionaries from mainstream Churches (Baptists in Romania, Lutherans and Anglicans in Russia) are likely to talk about how they are working with the National Churches to save the society for God. In other words, they include themselves in the “us” of traditional (respectable) religions working together for the souls of the nation’s citizens – it is the others who are “them”. But we can hear a similar claim from the religions that emerged as sects in the nineteenth century (Jehovah’s

²² In Ukraine, the fact that there are three Orthodox Churches complicates the issue as they tend to hate and/or distrust each other more than they hate and/or distrust the new religions, but the Ukrainian parliament recently had before it a draft law designed to protect citizens from psychologically dangerous influences – which are generally taken to refer to cults – particularly, but by no means only, the White Brotherhood of Maria Devi Khrystos. Parts of the draft law seem remarkably reminiscent of the protection offered to Soviet citizens who were defined as mentally ill when their ideological opinions did not match those of the state.

Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists). They too define themselves as being an integral part of their expanded, “respectable” “us” of Christian society. This, of course, leaves the new religious movements being defined as “them” by pretty well everyone – except, of course, themselves.

It is true that, as mentioned earlier, there is a sense in which “new new” religions will define themselves as “us” in opposition to the rest of society. This does not, however, mean that they cease to regard themselves as citizens of the country of their birth. But while Russian Rajneeshees, Bulgarian Moonies, Hungarian Scientologists, or Polish devotees of Krishna might consider themselves to be Russian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Polish, or whatever, they have, in the eyes of many of their compatriots, denied themselves the normal rights of citizenship. By swearing allegiance to a *multi*-national, global religion, they have proved themselves to be *anti*-national – traitors.²³

VI. Minority Religions and Minority Rights

It is not merely the rhetoric of nationalism that leads “cultists” to be labelled as “other”. Treating members of minority religions as lesser citizens, with lesser right to normal rights, is frequently justified with reference to their beliefs and practices – or alleged beliefs and practices. Of course, not all members of new religions are saints; they are, although some might be amazed to learn, fairly ordinary human beings. The fact that they belong to new religions can, however, dispose some of them to be either somewhat

²³ One of the many interesting qualifications to this pattern which space does not permit me to explore more fully here is that some of the indigenous new religions – the Church of the Last Testament followers of Vissarion in Russia, the Soldiers of Christ in Armenia are treated with just as much, if not more, suspicion. And they have not even the multi-nationals at the end of an e-mail to garner international support to protest on their behalf.

An even more curious twist to the story is the attitude of some Pagan groups in, for example, Poland, the Baltic States, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Armenia, and the Volga region of Russia (Wiench 1997; Filatov 1995), which worship the *really* national gods – the gods of the earth whom the “foreigners” destroyed when they brought Christianity to change the land forever – and for the worse – some hundreds of years ago.

better or somewhat worse than they might otherwise be; certainly, they do tend to take religion more seriously than most, and that can be a dangerous thing – look at what the old religions have got up to.

If members of a new religion break the law – and several have – then clearly the law should be applied to them in exactly the same way as it would be to anyone else. But any nation that affirms the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms cannot apply special laws to someone *because of his or her beliefs*.²⁴ If the arrival of new or alien religions results in things being done of which we do not approve, but which are not covered by the law, it may be necessary to introduce new laws – to protect children born into some movements, perhaps. But in a democratic society that claims all its citizens are equal before the law, such new laws should apply equally to all – be they Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, or Muslim, Seventh-day Adventist, Krishna devotee, or Scientologist.

There are, nonetheless, reasons which lead normally tolerant people to say that – although they would not dream of attacking members of new religions for their beliefs, and although (generally speaking) they agree with everyone “having the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”²⁵ and although everyone is entitled to basic human rights “without distinction of any kind, such as religion”²⁶ – one does, they will say, have to recognise that one just might have to introduce special methods to control the movements. This, they will argue, is because the actions of new religions can pose a threat to the individual members themselves (as in the case of

²⁴ In fact, the United States’ 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act did allow members of some religions to partake in certain practices that would otherwise be defined as criminal – unless the State could show that there was a compelling State interest why they should not carry out such a practice. The Act was overturned by The United States Supreme Court on 24 June 1997 as the result of a case involving the Roman Catholic Church.

²⁵ United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18.

²⁶ *Ibid.* Article 2.

Heaven's Gate), or to others in their own movement (as in the case of the Solar Temple), or to those with whom they cross swords (such as the lawyer in a case against Synanon who found a snake in his mail box) or, most frighteningly of all, to innocent members of the public (as in the case of Aum Shinrikyo and the commuters on the Tokyo underground). Of course, these were all horrific and (with the exception of the Heaven's Gate suicides) criminal acts – but the very fact that they were criminal acts, means that they could be prosecuted under the “normal” criminal law.

VII. Popular Images of the New Religions and their Consequences

Cults, it is not uncommonly alleged, indulge in brainwashing their victims, the breakup of families, political intrigues, financial skulduggery, gun-running, drug trafficking, sexual orgies, ritual child abuse, suicide, and murder. They should, therefore be subject to special regulation or banned altogether.

Now it is true that members of *some* new religions have indulged in *some* of these practices at *some time*. It is also true that some members of *old religions* – and, indeed, some members of *no* religion – have done so. To take but one example, there are literally hundreds of Roman Catholic priests who have been indicted for sexual abuse of children in the United States during the past decade; and it was not an altogether facetious reply when, in answer to the question “when does a cult turn into a religion?” a gentleman from Oxford was reported in *The Guardian* as answering: “When they stop killing themselves and start killing other people.”

Among the various factors that load the dice against members of new religions' being able to enjoy human rights commensurate with their normal status as citizens, special attention might be paid to the input that the media and anti-cult movements have in creating the image that members of a society have of new religions. It is common knowledge that no two people ever have exactly the same picture of reality. Each version of “the truth” is more or less influenced by the information that we use to construct our own version, and that information is, to a greater or lesser degree, selected according to our aims and interests. Furthermore, groups of people who have common aims and interests tend to construct reality in ways that are

systematically different from other groups with other aims and interests (Barker 1995c).

Media images

Thus the media, whose aim is to gain and keep viewers, readers and/or listeners, have an interest in the atypical, the sexy, the bizarre – anything that will attract attention. Stories about people leading normal, happy lives are assumed (usually quite correctly) to be of little or no interest to a potential audience. On the other hand, a sinister cult with bizarre beliefs and weird practices is, let's face it, interesting. Furthermore, news is not *news* if it is old hat. The producers of media stories have got neither time or space to go into any depth in most of their stories. The result is that the sensational stories get reported – and because the public image of a cult is almost automatically one of lurid fascination, a criminal activity perpetrated by a cult member will get reported, while one committed by a member of a majority religion is unlikely to be reported – or, if it is, the fact that the perpetrator of the act is a Catholic, or whatever the majority religion happens to be, will not be mentioned.

The consequence of all this is that the visibility of bizarre or “bad news” related to cults is likely to be disproportionate to its relative occurrence – it may well be that Catholics, or Anglicans, have a higher rate of criminal behaviour than members of minority religions, but the impression will be that it is the cultists, not members of the Anglican, Catholic, or Orthodox Church who commit so many of those crimes. None of this is to suggest that all pictures of reality are equally valid. They are not. There are methods by which more reliably accurate pictures of empirical reality can be constructed and tested. The social scientist would have to conduct a comparative analysis with a “control group” of Catholics or Anglicans (or members of the general population) of the same age and social background as the members of the new religion, and then see whether the rate of, say, child abuse was greater in the one group than it was in the other. It might well be that the results would lead us to ask what it might be about the new religions that *stopped* their members from committing suicide, murder, sexual abuse – or what-have-you.

Anti-cultist images

The other common-interest group that ought to be mentioned briefly is the so-called anti-cult movement. This is an efficiently organised network of groups around the world that provides negative information about NRMs. Again, there is no space to go into any details of the way such groups operate, and it ought to be stressed that there is quite a wide variety of beliefs and practices to be found among anti-cultists, but their effectiveness in helping the media and, indeed, the population at large, to define the “cult reality” in their terms is by no means insignificant. Curiously enough, many of the anti-cultists bear an uncanny resemblance to the cultists whom they attack. They present a kind of mirror image in which the cult’s “good and godly” becomes the anti-cultists “evil and satanic,” and the “us” of the cultist becomes the “them” of the anti-cultist. For the anti-cultist, as for some of the new religions, it is all or nothing – you are either unequivocally with us or you are against us. To introduce qualifications, as social scientists are likely to do, is to “muddy the waters.”

State control

The rising nationalism associated with the National Churches and the negative images of new religions presented by the media and the anti-cultists, and the widely publicised anti-social and criminal behaviour perpetrated by a few of the movements in various places around the world have led to pressure being put upon governments to “do something” about the cults – and it can be quite a popular move for politicians publicly to attack the movements, whom few are likely to defend.

One way that the State may control religious minorities and, to some extent, religious majorities also, is through registration. States differ in the extent to which they consider that this is necessary and/or desirable. Sometimes the law makes it particularly difficult for minority religions to register and there are great disadvantages in not being registered. Registration may, for example, require a mandatory minimum of 10,000 members (unless, as in the case of the Czech Republic, the religion is a member of the World Council of Churches, in which case, only 100 members are necessary), thus

effectively excluding many minority religions; another criterion may be the length of time the religion has been in existence in the country, with a period of, say, one hundred years effectively excluding new and/or most foreign religions.

While there are ways in which registration will provide positive assistance to a religion by giving it money or subsidies, and permitting it to act as a corporate body in law, registration can also function as a means of curtailing the activities of the religion – dictating, for instance, how the children are to be educated. But not being registered might mean that a religious body is unable to hire a hall for meetings, or even to use its own premises for acts of worship; it may even mean that it cannot function as a religious organisation in some societies.

States do not need to pass discriminatory laws to contribute to a society's discrimination. Even if the legislature does not discriminate against minority religions (and several post-Communist Constitutions are scrupulously exemplary in their care not to do so), the actual *implementation* of the law may be discriminatory, and there are numerous instances of a non-discriminatory law being grossly violated (Levinson 1996). Governments may also produce Reports containing highly questionable information.²⁷ This year I have given my graduate students a new exercise. They had to write 1500-word critiques of the depiction of new religions in a 1996 Report written by the Russian Ministries of Internal Affairs (Kulikov 1996) and Health (Tsaregorodtsev 1996). As students, they have enthusiastically exposed the methods that resulted in this extraordinarily rich hotchpotch of gross distortions, generalisations, inconsistencies, and downright inaccuracies. But, of course, it is not such fun if you are a member of a new religion which is defined as one of the “dangerous, destructive cults” that,

²⁷ This is by no means something that is confined to post-Communist societies. The recent French Report, *Les Sectes en France*, and the Belgian Report (313/7-95/96, April 1997) have been cited and used as though they *were* official policy to discriminate against the movements labelled as “dangerous cults.”

it is implied, ought to be banned, repressed and/or controlled in one way or another.

The social scientific approach

It cannot be only social scientists who believe it is important that accurate and unbiased accounts of what particular religions really believe and really do – and really do not do – are available. This is not only to protect the religions from generalising prejudice and bigotry, but also to alert society to potential dangers – and to help us to try to prevent those spiralling antagonisms which can eventually result in disaster (Waco is but one dramatic example – the current situation of the Scientologists in Germany promises to be another, though, it is to be hoped, less tragic). Not that we shall ever be able to anticipate, let alone solve, *all* the problems that will, no doubt, continue to confront us. Whether the five further deaths of members of the Solar Temple that took place in March 1997 could have been avoided, I do not know – perhaps; perhaps not.

But, given the gross lack of reliable information and the profusion of misinformation that abounds, there is certainly room for improvement. During the course of my study of new religions over the past quarter of a century I have seen what seems to me to be an enormous amount of unnecessary suffering through ignorance and misconception. In 1988, with the support of the British government and the mainstream Churches, I set up a small charity called Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (INFORM) with the aim of providing information that is as accurate, objective, and up-to-date as possible. INFORM draws on an international network of experts (scholars, lawyers, doctors, therapists) and people with personal knowledge of the movements (such as the members themselves, ex-members, and relatives of members). Enquirers telephone, write, or visit the office for information. INFORM also offers a number of other services. If asked, it will mediate between a relative (usually a parent, but sometimes a spouse) and the movement concerned. It produces literature (books – see Barker 1989 and Towler 1995 – and leaflets about particular movements); provides talks and lectures; and organises day-long seminars, attended by about 100

persons twice a year, which deal with a variety of topics, such as new religions and children, health, sex, the millennium, education, the law, the new age, the media, and violence.²⁸

INFORM does not have a magic wand, but it has managed to help a great number of parents and other enquirers. It keeps the Home Office informed of what is going on and tries both to alert the public when it sees potential problems and to reassure when there seems to be unfounded anxiety. Several of the more responsible members of the media have come to rely on INFORM quite heavily, and their reporting has become considerably more accurate – just as interesting, but less inflammatory.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

Minority religions have been treated with suspicion and discriminated against throughout the world and throughout history, and their fate in post-Communist societies is no exception. These new upstarts may not be systematically thrown to the lions or burned at the stake – but burnings have taken place, bombs have been thrown and people are still dying for their faith. Of course, members of minority religions are by no means the only people to suffer, and some of their number have undoubtedly inflicted suffering upon themselves and others. But that is no reason for us not to try to understand them and, indeed, all those who have beliefs that we ourselves do not share; nor is it any reason not to extend to them the same rights – and restrictions – as are extended to any other citizen.

Modern society has given rise to a vast diversity of experience; few people have the same jobs or live in the same geographical or social environment as their parents, let alone their grandparents. The religious answers that satisfied our parents do not always satisfy our children. A world view that can satisfy

²⁸ Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (INFORM) is housed at the London School of Economics, to which it is affiliated through the Sociology Department. Further information is available from INFORM, Houghton St, London WC2A 2AE, tel: +44 171 955 7654; e-mail INFORM@LSE.ac.UK. We are always grateful to receive information about new religions in any part of the world.

an agricultural worker in rural Poland will not necessarily satisfy a university professor in Belgrade or a baker in Niš. Migration, travel, the mass media, and increasingly sophisticated electronic means of communication, have opened new horizons that recent history has shown cannot be successfully suppressed.

Except under conditions of totalitarian rule, diversity of world-views is inevitable in the twenty-first century. But there are no independent criteria that can resolve disagreements over supernatural or other non-empirical claims. Diversity can result in internecine battles at the one extreme, or in peaceful coexistence – pluralism – at the other. When national identity becomes associated exclusively with a particular religion, and other beliefs are treated, not as alternative religions contributing to the richness of a nation's culture, but as treacherous ideologies, we are likely to see prejudice, discrimination, and possibly, bloodshed. If, however, we accept that national identity and membership of a particular religion need not necessarily be related – if we can tolerate diversity and even celebrate pluralism – we may come to accept, in answer to the question I was asked in Poland over ten years ago, that it is perfectly possible, and perhaps it is also healthier, to live in a society in which no *one* – and, thereby, *everyone* – may win.

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I. RELIGION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Zdzisław Mach

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

One of the most controversial issues in contemporary history and the current transformation of Central and Eastern Europe is the role of religious organizations, especially the Roman Catholic Church in social and cultural change. This is true at least for some countries of the region, especially for Poland, where the Roman Catholic Church has been one of the central political forces and constructors of ideologies and world views.

In this paper I would like to make a few remarks on the role which Churches, and especially the Roman Catholic Church, play in the current process of transformation and reconstruction of identity of Central European societies. Most of my own experience comes from Polish society, and therefore, a large part of the following text will be based on the observations concerning the Polish society and culture; but I believe that, in many aspects, the processes concerning identity are similar in most or all of societies of present-day Central Europe. Poland is also the country in which the Roman Catholic Church reached a particularly prominent position in politics and culture, and it is there where its role is the most significant and shows its various aspects particularly clearly.

It is perhaps obvious to say that Central Europe today experiences a crisis which has many dimensions: social, political, economic, ideological, and cultural. I believe that one of the most difficult aspects of this crisis is

that which concerns the identity of various groups of people on different levels of social organization.

Despite the different histories that Central European societies had before the end of World War II, the 50-year period of Communism and Soviet domination created fundamental similarities in many respects. In spite of the Marxist ideology of a perfect socialist society in which all the collective identities of the previous social formations were supposed to disappear and give way to the development of class identity and subsequently to its dissolution in a classless society, in practice of politics and ideology, the Communist states constructed their images of social organization and their models of collective identity according to national criteria. Soviet satellite states were organised after 1945 as nation-states, and a lot of effort was made to make them ethnically homogeneous, or to build them in such a way that their ethnic composition would be clear and would constitute the main basis of identity formation.

One may suspect that, in the attempt to build the post-war Soviet empire, national and ethnic factors were used as instruments of manipulation and control. Each of the satellite Central and Eastern European states either had some internal ethnic problems or actual or potential tensions and conflicts with neighboring states based on ethnic issues. Such a political organization conformed with the dominating nationalistic view of social organization which Central and Eastern European societies held at that time, according to which, each ethnic group should have a political organization of its own to protect its interests, its cultural identity and its resources from other groups of different cultures. According to such a world view, every nation, understood as a cultural unit, as an ethnic group developing its political identity through modernization, social mobility and mass education, ought to create its own sovereign state. (On the discussion of ethnic origin of nations and nationalism see, for example, Gellner 1983 and Smith 1986).

In most parts of Central Europe and in Eastern Europe, with the exception of Russia itself, nations in the modern sense developed without their own states. Their nationalistic ideologies, therefore, remained largely unfulfilled and their movements of national liberation unsuccessful. The national

identity of those societies was built on the basis of shared culture, mythology, or rather a mythologized past, literature, visual art, and music, to a large extent created on purpose by artists who romantically considered themselves creators of the national culture and contributors to the spiritual community of their people.

Religion was also a very significant part of that shared national culture, and churches played an important role of constructors and promoters of national culture. Especially in such countries as Poland, where most of the neighbours and most of the enemies defined as such by the mythologized national history were of different religion, faith and church were strongly linked with the national identity.

The state was part of national identity and of nationalism as a myth, as a memory of the past (in some cases such as Poland or Hungary) or as dream about the future. On the other hand there was little or no connection between nationalistic ideology and an actual existing state, an organisation to which citizens owed loyalty and which had a legitimate monopoly over many aspects of public life. Members of the Central European nations did not have a chance to develop an attitude of citizens to their state. There was also no concept of a nation-state economic system, which would link the economic activity of citizens to their national identity. Eastern European nationalism developed against the state rather than within the state, as was the case in most Western European countries. Opposition to the oppressive state was in Eastern Europe, part of nationalism, a component of national identity, glorified in the seminal works of the national culture as a patriotic act.

National churches contributed to this by constructing symbolic meanings which would saturate patriotic activity with positive emotions and with religious, sacred sense. In Poland for example, the Roman Catholic Church developed the cult of St. Stanislaus, a medieval bishop of Kraków sentenced to death by the king for the act of treason. The only historical source, the Chronicle by "anonymous Gall," gave a very vague description of the series of events that led to the bishop's execution. (Gallus Anonymus 1989:54). The Church interpreted this story in such a way that the king was portrayed as murderer who personally killed the bishop, while the victim's

guilt consisted of criticizing the king for immoral conduct and abuse of power. The bishop thus became the patron saint of all anti-state opposition, and the opposition itself obtained a sacred value of a patriotic act against evil forces. (Kubik 1954:130-133).

I understand here the construction of identity as a process of building symbolic models which give meaning to the world, offer an interpretation of experience and enable people to understand the reality of life in its present form, as well as the past and future. Institutions competing over influence on people's minds offer interpretations of the world. They try to gain support by providing a better understanding of the world and provide interpretations which would be better related to the interests, self esteem, aspirations, and various aspects of relations with other groups. Churches also compete over world views by constructing meaning through symbolic discourse realized in narratives, that is, stories and images produced by social agents. Discourses provide vocabulary for social interactions (see Alexander 1992) and enable people to collectively produce and transform meanings of the world. Narratives, that is, symbolic texts produced by partners of social relations, make sense of these relations, provide an ideological and emotional ground for interactions, construct images of self and of partners, and enable people to create order out of chaotic experience and understand it.

Religious organisations in complex societies are among the most active constructors of world views and compete for the leading role as providers of meanings and orientation for the society. In the post-modern world, Churches are faced with a situation which they often find difficult to accept, that there is no longer a need or even an approval for symbolic monopoly, and that more and more people take for granted the existence of many, alternative world views and symbolic discourses from which they may choose or even use different ones on different occasions or at different periods in their life. Relativism and pluralism are especially difficult for those churches which, like the Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Europe, are not used to such a competition in the symbolic market which would aim at increasing pluralism rather than at a total victory of the strongest competitor. Competition over world views, and ideologies in the communist

world was part of the political game, the struggle for monopoly, the rebellion against the totalitarian system, which would not allow any pluralism. In effect, the Church is not used to a free market of symbolic discourses; it feels at home in the situation where it has to struggle for survival or for domination.

The Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Europe, especially in those parts where it enjoyed majority support, played a crucial role in the nineteenth century in the construction of the national identities of modernising societies of the region. It provided a frame of reference for those who sought ideological background for their nationalism, that is, for the ideas and movements which would lead to the creation of nations and nation-states. In Poland, the Church was a leading force in patriotic attempts to shake off foreign domination, and was perceived as the major, if not the only, legally existing opposition to the foreign powers that occupied the partitioned Poland. The Church created a coherent symbolic model which linked Catholicism with Polishness and was viewed by ethnic Poles as the main agent of Polish nationalism and national identity. (Mach 1993:147-152).

During the Communist period in Eastern Europe, the Roman Catholic Church was generally perceived as an anti-state force, an organisation opposing, as much as it could, the Communist transformation of the society, its economy, its structure, and especially its culture. The Church opposed official atheism, secularisation of education, elimination of religious elements from the national traditions as they were officially constructed, presented, and taught. The Church was also against the Communist-planned changes in the legal system, nationalisation of economy, introduction of the one-party system, suppression of political opposition, as well as issues concerning family life, such as the liberal divorce law and, especially, legalization of abortion.

However, in the reality of everyday discourse, the Church paid little attention to the problems of the private lives of citizens or family morality. Little attention was also given by the priests to such problems as work ethics, especially in view of the fact that work and economic activity of citizens had not been before, as mentioned above, the main focus of the Church attention. The ideological discourse of the Roman Catholic Church

concentrated on state politics, national sovereignty, and the construction of the national identity of society in such a way that religion became its central element, while Communism was portrayed as a totally alien element, incompatible with anything which was the essence of the tradition and identity of the societies in Eastern Europe.

A characteristic feature of the Eastern European Communist societies was the polarisation of symbolic discourses which gave meaning to people's experience in relation to state politics. The reality of social relations was of course not so simple, with many ambiguities, different beliefs, conflicting interests, tensions, and individual and collective mobility. In particular, the religious beliefs and practices differed from one segment of society to another, from traditional, peasant society religiosity to post-modern, individual beliefs. On the other hand, both the state and the anti-Communist opposition, including the Roman Catholic Church, constructed an image of a unified nation against the Communist state. This was at least true for Poland, where the Church enjoyed a great deal of popular support strengthened by its being the only institution independent of the state, and by its identification with Polish national interests. The symbolic political discourse of the Church and the anti-state dissidents presented society as ideologically polarized into two segments clearly set apart and in permanent conflict: the Communist, atheistic state, and the Polish, Roman Catholic nation with its Church. In this clear and coherent picture, there was no place for internal divisions in the society such as ethnic or religious minorities, status differences, class, gender opposition and so on, which would be then regarded as a weakening of the nation which was supposed to remain united. The principle of unity was of tremendous ideological importance. For the Roman Catholic Church, it was linked with the idea that Catholicism had been, for centuries, the essence of Polishness, and therefore the Church became the national institution, the core element of the nation's identity. The Church portrayed itself as the guardian of national-Christian traditions thanks to which the Polish nation had maintained its identity throughout the long years of foreign domination. The moral monopoly of the Church would then, not be an usurpation or an attempt to deprive the people of their right to choose, but a logical

consequence of the historical development of unity of the nation and its faith. In the attempt to gain as much support as possible, to establish itself as the centre of Polish national identity, and to avoid antagonising potential allies because of differences in world view, the Church under Communism was extremely inclusive. It opened its door as widely as possible, inviting everybody who did not identify with Communism to join. Liberal intellectuals, for example, many of whom were in their religious attitudes, beliefs, and world view, as well as in the practice of their everyday life, very far from the ideal type of the devoted Catholic, were nevertheless allowed to operate within the Church organisational framework, to publish in Catholic journals that were relatively independent of the state, and to organise lectures or exhibit works on the Church's premises. The main idea was to unite the whole anti-Communist world and to bring it under the Church's protection.

This strategy undoubtedly had enormous impact on the politics in Poland, and to some extent also in other parts of Eastern Europe. The contribution of the Roman Catholic Church to the destruction of communism is huge and cannot be overestimated. The election of the Bishop of Kraków as Pope only added to this role of the Church. The Pope became a symbol of the anti-Communist Church. He was also a living proof that even under Communist domination, a society led by the Church can produce a personality whose independence, integrity, intellect, and moral strength makes him a suitable candidate for the papacy — the highest office in the Church and one of the leading positions in the western, Latin, non-Communist world. So the Pope was a symbol of national independence and strength. He also symbolised the link between Eastern Europe and the West, a relation which the Communist state tried hard to make their societies forget. (Kubik 1994:130-146).

Paradoxically, the Communist state also propagated the idea of unity, the moral-political unity of the nation with its state. The symbolic discourse of the state also presented society as a culturally homogeneous entity, building its socialist institutions and happily marching towards its bright future under the leadership of the Communist party and its state. This time, of course, there was no place for the Church or religion in the picture.

Catholicism was eliminated from the state's symbolic model of the world, and society was presented as going rapidly through a process of secularisation, identified with modernisation and socialist development, and therefore with social progress.

This discourse of national unity, which seemed to dominate the public symbolic world, had the side effect of eliminating discussion of many social and cultural issues. For very many people, the problems of minorities, for example, ceased to exist. They were neither talking nor thinking about them. This was not the way they saw the social world. They lacked the concepts and vocabulary to describe society in its complex diversity. The discourse of unity and polarisation, of opposition between nation and state, dominated the symbolic world.

The end of Communism, to which the Roman Catholic Church contributed so much, also brought a dramatic change for this powerful institution. The main political conflict was over, and despite of the fact that many political parties claimed that the anti-Communist revolution was far from complete, the political and ideological world ceased to be perceived as polarised. The discourse of binary opposition between nation and state largely disappeared, as it no longer corresponded with the feeling that most people began to have in Eastern Europe; that they had started to live in a free world, that the market economy had been introduced, and that isolation from the West had ended. The polarised view of the world was no longer instrumental in giving meaning to experience.

People wanted a new model, which would account for the change they were experiencing. Freedom, openness, and return to Europe became the main idioms of the new discourse. In Poland, the new, non-Communist government was naturally perceived as having close relations with the Roman Catholic Church, especially since the first non-Communist Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki was a well-known member of the Catholic intelligentsia. The Church emerged from the 50 years of struggle with Communism a victorious, triumphant, and extremely powerful institution. But it was not an institution with any practice in operating in a democratic, not to mention a postmodern, pluralistic society. Fifty years before, when

Eastern European countries were building their nation-states, the whole world looked different, many ideas of pluralism, openness, and tolerance, now taken for granted in the most advanced democracies, were not popular and in many parts of the Western world, religious organisations were strongly linked to states, with much influence on the legal system, education, and the media. Since World War II the world has changed, but in Eastern Europe, the Roman Catholic Church was busy trying to mobilise society against Communism and, on the one hand, did not have a chance to become an established Church with links to government, and on the other hand, it enjoyed a lot of support and a position of moral authority because of its political role, without having to influence the state. The free media and the free market of ideas did not exist, and education was under the total control of the Communist party. So there was little to fight for in these aspects of social life, and the Church's energy was directed elsewhere.

The great changes of 1989 were a triumph for the Roman Catholic Church everywhere in Central Europe, and especially where, as in Poland, the Church was a major architect of the anti-Communist revolution. Yet, the Church soon discovered that their dream, among many clergy probably never fully articulated, nevertheless clearly present in their world view of acquiring a moral monopoly enforced by the new political and legal structures, would not be fulfilled. The disappearance of the great enemy, the Communist state, broke the ideological and political polarisation of the society and put a question mark on the political role of the Church.

In Poland, the opinion poles soon discovered that a growing majority of the Polish population objected to the Church's involvement in politics. For many influential members of the Church hierarchy, the temptation to become the established Church was hard to resist. So the Church in Poland began to influence state politics and the process of transformation of the legal system. The first important goal which the Polish Roman Catholic Church attempted to achieve was to regain direct influence over public education. An effort was made to introduce religion as an obligatory part of the school curriculum. Non-believers were to be allowed to take classes in Ethics, but this was problematic due to the lack of qualified teachers,

especially outside of big urban centres. Opponents of the Church's initiative argued that those children who chose (or whose parents chose) not to attend classes of Catholic religion would suffer from intolerance, especially since Poles had already forgotten what it was like to live in a culturally pluralistic society, and the ideological principle of unity made them even less open towards minorities. The Church's chief argument was tradition, the link between the Polish national identity and religion, and the ideological identification of atheism with Communism. Since it was the Communist regime that had removed religion from school, it seemed natural for the first non-Communist government to put it back. The actual decision was made without proper public discussion or even a parliamentary decision, and this strengthened the view that the Church was seeking direct influence of the state. The Polish Church failed to realise that society was no longer polarised, that a variety of divisions, previously hidden or "frozen," surfaced and started to determine the world view of large groups of people. Not only did non-Catholic minorities and non-believers become more visible in the society. Many nominally Catholic people who had previously, that is, under Communism, identified with the Church and were ready to follow the Church's directions now diverted their attention to other domains of life than religion or politics.

The opening of the borders of Eastern Europe to the West resulted, among other things, in a free exchange of ideas and cultural texts. This exchange was not exactly symmetrical. The East was hungry for Western culture, to overcome the long isolation and to satisfy its curiosity, as well as to realise the ideal of freedom. Many of these ideas were not compatible with the Church's world view, and the Church objected against their popularisation, especially in the media.

Various campaigns were launched against eroticism, religious sects, or publications which might offend Catholics by questioning or mocking the principles of their faith. All texts which combined religious elements with sex, particularly, even by an indirect association, were severely criticised and the Church demanded their ban. Liberalism, as such, was interpreted as being against religion, and liberal Western culture as dangerous to the

spiritual and cultural identity of the people of Eastern Europe. The Church evidently found it difficult to function in a social system dominated by freedom of choice and by a free market of ideas, where religious institutions were obliged to compete for influence and where there was skepticism for any claim to absolute truth. According to the old polarised view of the world, the Church tended to identify atheism with Communism, liberalism with atheism, and reluctance to show unconditional support to the Church with anti-religious attitudes. As under Communism, the one who is not with us is against us, and the one who is against us is an enemy. Such a view was functional and effective at the time of struggle with the oppressive regime, but it does not meet the requirements of an open society.

Convinced of its influence on society, the Church diverted its attention from politics to morality and family life. And here again a disappointment was experienced by many priests and bishops. Sexual morality, the aspect of family life which was of particular concern to the Church, was in Eastern Europe very far from the Catholic ideal. Abortion was widespread, extra-marital sex was popular and accepted, and contraceptives became the norm for large segments of the population. It was so under Communism, and it became even more so with more openness and more choice after 1989. But before 1989 the Church was little concerned, at least publicly, with morality, paying more attention to politics. Now the clergy realised not only that their teaching was not followed, but also that they were going to lose support by emphasising the necessity for Catholics to live life according to the Church's views.

In Poland, the highly controversial issue of abortion and its legal ban became the focus of attention, the main boundary dividing society, and the test of political orientation. The conflict over abortion brought back ideological polarisation resembling that which was known from the Communist times. Communist Poland had a very liberal law concerning abortion, which allowed it to be performed if the woman had serious economic problems or was in a difficult social or personal situation. In practice, abortion was available on demand. This became regarded as normal by very many, maybe most Poles, and there was silence about abortion in both the official, state

control, and the oppositional public discourse. Because of the rapid shift of attention of the Church from politics to morality and family, abortion suddenly became a big issue. After a long debate which revealed deep divisions within the Polish society, parliament passed a law which restricted legal abortion to cases when a women's life was in danger because of pregnancy, when pregnancy resulted from a crime, or when the embryo was seriously damaged. The law was a compromise between those who, like the Church, supported a total ban of abortion and those who took a liberal, pro-choice view. The compromise did not last long. The new, socialist-dominated parliament changed the anti-abortion law, which was seen as very restrictive by liberals. The main argument was that women ought to have a choice, that social and personal reasons should justify abortion, and that the limitation of access to legal abortion contributed to the development of an illegal practice of termination of pregnancy, thus segregating the society into those who were rich enough not to worry about consequences of unwanted pregnancy, and those, mainly women from poor families, often having alcoholic husbands, who had to suffer from the consequences of having many unwanted children. The Roman Catholic Church was a main partner in the debate and the conflict over the liberalisation of the anti-abortion law. The Church developed a discourse which identified abortion with killing, and those who supported liberalisation were portrayed as enemies of the Polish nation and as Communists (because it was the Communist regime which had introduced the liberal law abolished after 1989). The discourse was then transformed into a polarised model in which liberalism equaled Communism. The Church's criticism of the liberalisation of the abortion laws did not take into account the fact that the law was merely about the penalisation of abortion, and that the choice remained with the women, on whom the Church, should she be a Catholic, would always be able to impose its moral and religious sanctions. The way the Church presented the whole issue gave the impression that the liberalisation was, in fact, an obligation to have an abortion. According to opinion polls, the majority of Polish society would support the liberalisation of abortion, and the supporters of the pro-choice movements include not only socialists and

post-Communists, but also liberals, often prominent representatives of the former anti-Communist opposition, feminists, even some Christian intellectuals who, although they generally presented the view that abortion should be avoided, nevertheless regarded it as a lesser evil, which could be justified on social and psychological grounds. The liberal view also included the demand for sexual education in schools, the availability of contraceptives, and many social reforms which would help women to avoid unwanted pregnancy. The Church did not support sexual education or contraceptives, and proposed considering sexual life the private concern of families. Aware of the fact that the majority of society supported liberalisation of the anti-abortion law, the Church opposed the idea of solving the question with a referendum, and tried to use political pressure to prevent parliament from changing the law. It was changed, however, in 1996, and since then, abortion has remained a big issue in Polish politics and public discourse, polarising society once again on the ideological level.

It became evident, even before the conflict over the abortion law, that the Roman Catholic Church was not prepared to function in the democratic society which emerged from post-Communist Eastern Europe. The Church, a powerful, strictly centralised, and in its internal organisation, very non-democratic institution, developed mechanisms of surviving and achieving success in a totalitarian system. In particular, the Church was very skilled in mobilising people's energy and action in a centralised, authoritarian state, ideologically and politically polarised, in which all agents of the public domain used the symbolic discourse of a black-and-white, polarised world, picturing their opponents as enemies and accumulating categories of value-loaded classification. The pluralistic world, relativism and tolerance, acceptance of differences and readiness to establish different platforms of interaction with people and groups of different world views was, for the Church, a new world. It seemed to be easier to try to apply the old ways, the old, familiar language of struggle rather than compete. Even some prominent members of the Church hierarchy were aware of that. Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, secretary of the Polish Episcopate, said that "for the Church an unquestionable shortcoming of democracy is its inseparable feature – the

principle of the majority... This principle can not be applied to essential issues, that is, to those which relate to the principles of faith or morality, within the Church as well as outside it, also in the State.” (Pieronek 1996:10-11). The Church, which was the major agent of anti-Communist opposition, largely responsible for its destruction in Central Europe, found it difficult to accept the consequences of the fall of Communism – the birth of democracy, and the development of a civil society, open and pluralistic, in which all institutions, including the Church, must compete for influence in the society. It was easier to reproduce the old, polarised system. Many representatives of the Church openly argued against the market economy. This was true both on the highest level (the Pope frequently expressed his reservations about a world ruled by money and economic competition) and the low level of parish priests. In research I conducted in one of the local communities in Poland, I interviewed a priest who was very critical about the newly introduced market economy, because his congregation was less ready to donate money to the church, preferring to spend it on goods which had just become available. The Church began to feel that it had lost control over society which diverted its interests to economic matters. But the most important was ideological competition. New ideas and ways of life came from the West and challenged the Church world view. It seems that many Church officials chose the easy option and tried to influence the state and the media, demanding a limitation of freedom, imposition of moral censorship, and control of the media for their congruence with the moral principles propagated by the Church.

The Church enjoyed great popular support in Poland due to its role in fighting for freedom under Communism and because of being the only legal institution offering an alternative world view. In Communist Poland, the Church did not have any formal power in education or the media, but had a lot of informal influence on society. Now, by claiming a role in state policy, it has begun to lose some of its informal position. Many people, while recognising the right of priests and bishops to propound moral teaching on matters of abortion and contraception, question their right to have their views enacted by parliament and imposed the moral monopoly by legal

sanctions. The issue is one concerning the proper boundaries of democratic civil society. Paradoxically, by switching its attention from the great national political issues to those of private morality, the Church has jeopardised its influence where it was hitherto strongest. The Church showed signs of disappointment in the lack of sufficient support, and to some extent returned to the discourse of conflict, especially after the 1993 parliamentary election in Poland brought victory to socialists and post-Communists who openly challenged the Church's attempts to secure moral monopoly in the society. One of the elements of the new discourse was the language of exclusion. Previously highly inclusive, open to all independent-minded people, the Church began to demand the complete loyalty of those who identified with it. Liberalism and individualism were attacked as identical with anti-religious sentiment, moral nihilism, and anti-national attitude. **Bibl. Jag.**

The fear of ideological competition influenced the Church's attitude towards European integration. Traditionally, that is in the nineteenth century and later under Communism, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland was a symbol of belonging to Western civilisation. The Church symbolised Latin culture, had its centre in Rome, was universalistic and independent of national or regional limitations. During the years of Communism, the Church emphasised those elements of Polish and Eastern European traditions which linked the region and its nations to Europe, as an alternative to the Communist, Russian-born ideology. The increasing openness of Eastern Europe to Western markets, the ideological challenge and the desire of Eastern European governments to join the European political and economic structures resulted in the Church expressing reservation and criticism. The general argument of the Church against integration with Europe of the Catholic countries of Eastern Europe is that this process may result in losing their national identities, systems of values and their faith, adopting instead the liberal and relativistic culture of Western Europe, its commercialism and market. Europe was present also in the discourse about abortion, where the European Union with its liberal legislation was presented by the Church as decadent, liberal (by then liberalism already meant evil), and, as some prominent members of the Church hierarchy use to say, "the culture of

death." The Church took the side of the nationalistic right wing parties and the populists, who oppose European integration on the ground that it would harm the countries' national interest, bring unfair economic competition and destroy traditional values. In that discourse, several equations were made: abortion equaled killing, liberalism was identified with atheism, and communism with evil. Abortion and contraceptives were identified with the culture of death, as was the Western culture in general.

The Church in its support for Polish nationalism, was active in the military, which traditionally has been identified with patriotism, and did not lose much of the trust of Polish society even under Communism. The military symbols identified with patriotism were employed by the Communist regime, and after 1989 the armed forces served in their symbolic function as supporters of the social transformation, though keeping a rather low profile. The Church made a successful attempt to acquire a strong and lasting role in the army. The Chaplain of the Polish army, Bishop Głódź, is present at most state ceremonial occasions, creating an image of an inseparable link between the army and the Church with the Polish national interests and identity.

The main line of argument of the Church about its role in society is the problem of the presence of religion in public life. The Church strongly opposes the view that religion should be the private concern of citizens, and therefore, the state should not be concerned with religion, while the Church should remain at a distance from the state affairs. The Church in Poland claims that religious believers should have access to public life. This, according to the Church, implies that the State constitution and the legislation should be based on religious principles, so that the believers can identify with the State and have a feeling that the State is really their own. Naturally, from the liberal point of view, in a socially and culturally pluralistic country, there remains the question of alienating those citizens who are non-believers or members of different churches. Also, it is against the liberal view that the state should be based on any religious belief. There is also a question of the possible claim of the Church hierarchy to control the State, its legislation and policies, and to verify their congruence with

religious norms. The liberal argument is that all citizens, believers or not, have access to public life in a democratic society, and that Catholics have no reasons to believe that their chances in this respect are in any way diminished. The Church also argues that the principle of the majority should not be applied to essential questions where religious beliefs are involved (such as abortion). On the other hand, it keeps demanding a privileged position in relation to state politics and the media, on the grounds that the majority of Poles are Catholic.

To sum up, it seems that the Roman Catholic Church finds it difficult to respond to the new challenges which arise from the development of democracy in Eastern Europe and of the desire of those countries to join the European institutions. The Church still uses the discourse of conflict, inherited from Communist times, when the Church built its unique position, at least in Catholic countries like Poland. Moral monopoly and direct influence on the state and law are still its main aims. On the other hand, the Church is very slow in reforming itself in such a way that would make it more flexible and better adapted to the rules of the market and ideological competition. Consequently, the Church is losing its popular support and its influence, and often relies on the old methods of ideological polarisation and the discourse of conflict to win its cause.

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ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND THE CONTENTS OF "POLISHNESS"

I

Whenever ethnic ties appear, religion is incorporated into the process of ethnic community construction. There are also cases where religious and ethnic ties intersect. Indeed, in the history of human societies we know of ethnic religions; these are usually cases of primitive or archaic societies, based on archaic tribal and family bonds. Among contemporary religions, Judaism has the character of an ethnic religion. In principle, this denomination is non-proselytising and ethnically exclusivist.

Catholicism, or Christianity in general, presents a quite different case; as a universalistic religion it cannot be an obviously ethnic one. Christianity, and in particular Roman Catholicism, is strongly proselytising. It can be connected with elements of a particular ethnicity only in a secondary sense.

However, in Poland, ethnic and religious criteria of identity overlap extensively in social perception.

The relationship between Polish ethnicity and Roman Catholicism has been intensively studied by historians, sociologists, and ethnographers. Scholars stress the strong connection between these criteria of social identity among Poles in the past, as well as in the present.

I would like to show how this occurs among contemporary Poles, how this fact is affected by various social and psychological factors, and how religious minorities are perceived as ethnic minorities as well.

We may observe asymmetrical social bonds: the majority of members of religious minorities define themselves as Poles. However, the Roman Catholic majority identifies them as non-Poles. This asymmetry may generate conflict because of the assumption that a Pole (or true Pole, or good Pole) must be a Roman Catholic. This situation may be exacerbated when religious minorities become a large part of a local community.

II

The specific image of Polish Catholicism is closely tied to a national characteristic. This gives Polish Catholicism its peculiar colour, and deprives it of its original universalism. However, it should be stressed that the Polishness-Catholicism relationship is not connected with any program; this is not an ethnic church. The national Polish-Catholic Church (Old Catholic) is not popular and very weak, something which is certainly not the case with the Anglican Church in Great Britain, which has an organic connection with the English nation and British Crown.

Yet, the association of ethnicity with religious themes and symbols diverts the attention of Polish Catholics from ethical and dogmatic problems to the problems of the national community, which basically sacralises religious faith.

More and more religious symbols take on a national meaning. I would even venture the opinion that in contemporary Polish Catholicism national contents dominate purely religious ones. At least they give it its special colour. Purely national symbols gain the dimensions of eternity and absolute-ness, conferring on them a supramundane character. Generally, I would suggest that Polish society is secularised to a high degree, i.e., people's basic motives and life goals have little to do with religious values. Secularisation is, in this way, associated with religiosity in institutional life.

I would treat the utilisation of religious symbols for the sacralisation of profane life as a form of secularisation.

The "God" who appears in the patriotic phrase "God and Homeland" (both words are written and thought about with capital letters) is a God

different from Christ, the savior of the world and all people, protector of humankind, conveyer of basic principles and teacher of goodness in our relations with other human beings. The figures of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, are connected with the particular problems of an ethnic group, i.e., the Polish community. The Blessed Virgin Mary is called the Queen of Poland or Queen of the Polish Crown.

On the other hand, the pontificate of Karol Wojtyła, popularly called the "Polish Pope" or "Our Polish Pope" definitely promotes the association between religious and ethnic characteristics. In folk Polish Catholicism, the figure of John Paul II is undergoing a rapid process of sacralisation, playing the role of a not-yet canonised new Polish saint. This process reminds us of patterns of the type of the popular archaic Catholicism of a nineteenth century Polish village, similar to the Latin American pattern of religiosity.

III

In recent years I have investigated the relationship between ethnic and religious (denominational) ties in common social perception.

A large scale survey among the younger generations in Poland in 1991 found that Polishness plays a crucial role in the self-identity of high school and university students. Religious identity was mentioned much less often as being important for self-identity. "Being a Pole" and "being a Catholic /member of one's religious group" were mentioned together in only a few cases.

Let me show the data more accurately.

One of our questions was to point out the position of national/ethnic identity in the entire structure of social identification of individuals: "If you had to characterise yourself briefly, which words presented below you would use?" We asked our respondents to choose three items.

We have presented the seven most important, in our opinion, levels of self-identification actually functioning in the social consciousness of contemporary Polish society. Certainly, other levels of social identification can be found, connected for instance with education and social or economic status. These criteria are usually taken into account as indicators of the

location (place) of the individual in the social structure, but do not generate, however, circles of social bonds. The levels of identification mentioned in our questionnaire are undoubtedly culturally more important.

The data acquired can be presented in the following ranking, taking into account the percentage of choices of individual items. We assumed that the choice of an item is an indicator of its place in the total construction of an individual's identification. It should be remembered that we can gain insight into the structure of social identification only on the macro-level and not on the level of individual personal identification.

1. I am a Pole	— 71,9%
2. I am a man/woman	— 69,6%
3. I am a human being	— 63,7%
4. I am a member of my denomination (e.g., Roman Catholic, Protestant...)	— 32,6%
5. I am an inhabitant of my region (e.g., Highlander, Silesian, Wielkopolska, Mazowsze...)	— 16,4%
6. I am a citizen of the world	— 14,2%
7. I am a European	— 11,0%

The table shows how important national/ethnic identity is for the large majority of young Poles. This is the most important component of their social identification among all proposed levels, in contrast with other levels of collective identity, including religious affiliation.

National/ethnic affiliation is important for nearly three quarters of the young people interviewed, and only identification with one's gender and belonging to mankind acquired comparable amounts of choices. Self-definition in terms of one's religious affiliation is definitely – underlined by one third of my respondents – more seldom.

The choice of being a citizen of the world and European enjoyed relatively little popularity. It shows how the terms connected with Global and European identity are rare in the social consciousness of the young generation of contemporary Poles. Their meaning seems to be empty and

vague and makes little sense to the studied group. The difference between the percentages of those respondents who stressed their Polish affiliation (nearly 72%) and those who mentioned their European affiliation (a little more than 11%) is so huge that it leaves no place for any doubt which of the two levels of identity compared is crucial and which is less important. The assertion that national/ethnic identity among young Poles is receding into the background is absolutely false. Social identification in terms of religion, instead, seems to be weakening.

The question remains, how intensive and effective behaviorally is this common self-identification in national/ethnic terms? We know that it has a declarative character, but we cannot be sure whether it leads to any definite choices of loyalty in those situations usually defined as difficult.

I have also examined constellations of identity level choices. There are certain constellations that occur much more often than others. The ranking of various constellations of collective identity elements is as follows:

1. Pole, man/woman, human being — 27,9%
2. Pole, man/woman, member of religious group — 11,5%
3. Pole, member of religious group, human being — 7,2%
4. Pole, human being, citizen of the world 4,5%
5. Man/woman, member of religious group, inhabitant of the region — 4,2%
6. Pole, man/woman, inhabitant of the region — 3,8%
7. Man/woman, citizen of the world, human being — 3,5%

Self-definition in terms of being a member of a particular religious group comes out in various constellations, being dispersed in differentiated configurations together with national/ethnic, gender and regional criteria. It was very rarely associated with "European" or "world citizen" identification. Most often "being European" is connected with gender, national/ethnic and mankind affiliation, i.e. with the criteria most often chosen by our respondents.

IV

One of the most important questions arising in any study of national/ethnic identity of a specific nation/ethnic group is the question of the

internal structure of this identity. I decided to ask our young respondents a very forward question which was to penetrate the very structure of Polishness in the minds of the young generation. The question was as follows: "What, in your opinion, makes someone a Pole?" (Nowicka: 1990) The question was closed – we gave our respondents several criteria of Polish national/ethnic identity and we asked them to give an evaluation of the importance of each criterion.

The criteria given for evaluation were as follows:

1. At heart to be Polish (Feeling that one is a Pole)
2. Good skill in the Polish language
3. Having knowledge about Polish culture and history
4. Holding Polish citizenship
5. Having at least one parent of Polish nationality
6. Having been born in Poland
7. Observing Polish customs
8. Permanent residence in Poland
9. Particular services for Poland
10. Catholic faith

The selection of these elements composing Polish national/ethnic identity was the result of numerous preparatory consultations and discussions in various social circles.

Several years earlier, in 1988, we had conducted another survey of Polish society to find out whether Poles considered the Roman Catholic faith important for their sense of Polishness. Nineteen percent of our respondents declared that the Roman Catholic faith was very important to being a Pole, 26% declared it rather important, 28% said it was not very important, and 23% said it was not important at all.

Instead "to feel Polish," "to know the Polish language," "to know Polish history and culture," and "to have at least one parent of Polish nationality" appeared to be the most important criteria of Polishness – mentioned by more than three quarters of the sample group.

Table 1

**Ranking order of answers to the question:
What makes, in your opinion, someone a Pole?**

Content of answer	Very important % / rank		Rather important	Rather not important	Decidedly not important % / rank		Diff. to say / no ans. %
At heart to be Polish	86,3	1	8,2	1,0	0,8	1	1,5 4,0
Good skill in Polish language	41,1	2	39,0	10,9	3,7	3	2,3 3,0
Having knowledge about Polish culture and history	41,0	3	39,3	9,0	2,8	2	4,7 3,2
Holding Polish citizenship	28,4	4	28,1	22,6	8,0	6	9,4 3,5
Having at least one parent of Polish nationality	24,9	5	40,3	18,4	6,0	4	7,0 3,3
To be born in Poland	24,6	6	36,5	20,1	10,4	7	5,7 2,8
Observing Polish customs	17,4	7	42,1	20,7	6,7	5	9,2 3,8
Permanent residence in Poland	17,1	8	33,8	24,7	12,4	8	8,2 3,8
Particular services for Poland	13,2	9	22,7	29,6	16,4	9	15,1 3,0
Catholic faith	9,2	10	17,1	19,1	41,1	10	10,0 3,5

We also tried to find out which of the proposed components of Polishness analysed above become necessary conditions for the transition from national/ethnic strangeness to membership in the Polish national/ethnic community.

Our respondents were asked a question which was supposed to give us insight into the level and character of Polish national/ethnic exclusivism.

The question was as follows: "Which condition should a foreigner fulfill so that we could consider him a Pole?"

My intention was to reach the very meaning of, or content of, Polishness "in a roundabout way." We did not ask about the meaning of being Polish, but about the conditions of becoming a Pole for someone who is not a Pole. Various nations are more or less exclusive. There are national groups that are absolutely closed – only substantial criteria decide membership. There are others which are much more open. My problem was: is the Polish national/ethnic group relatively closed or relatively open? I meant to make our respondents think and decide which criteria of Polishness are so "strong" that they allow a foreigner to become a Pole.

The following table shows the ranking order of criteria which constitute the bulk of conditions absolutely necessary to become a Pole in the opinions of our young respondents.

Table 2

Ranking order of answers to the question: Which condition should a foreigner fulfill to become a Pole?

Content of answer	Most important condition % rank		Least important condition % rank	
At heart to be Polish	69,9	1	1,7	10
To be born in Poland	4,5	2	10,9	3
To give particular services for Poland	4,2	3	10,9	2
To know Polish culture and history	4,2	4	4,8	9
To hold Polish citizenship	3,7	5	6,2	7
To live permanently in Poland	3,0	6	6,9	5
To observe Polish customs	2,2	7	5,9	8
To speak Polish well	1,5	8	6,4	6
To be Catholic	1,3	9	30,3	1
To marry into Polish family	0,7	10	8,7	4

We observed a striking similarity in the ranking order of the criteria of Polishness in the answers to the question investigating static Polishness and dynamic Polishness.

In a 1989 survey, we asked our respondents a provocative question: "To be a true Pole, is it necessary to be a Roman Catholic?" Seven percent answered "absolutely," 14% "yes." In other words, for a fifth of contemporary Poles, there exists a strong connection between Polishness and Catholicism.

V

Poland is a classic case of a society dominated by one religion – Roman Catholicism. Ninety-four percent of Polish citizens declare themselves to be Roman Catholics, 3% as members of other Christian churches, and 3% depict themselves as non-religious.

For this reason it seemed worthwhile to investigate how the connection between Catholicism and a strong sense of Polishness appears from the perspective of small Christian minorities.

I selected Lutherans and members of the Orthodox Church living in the most metropolitan city in Poland, Warsaw. I gathered 48 interviews, recorded on tape and transcribed.

My aim was to understand the world view of members of these two minority churches, their life experiences, and the opinion of members of a minority community about various questions concerning their relationships with Catholics and, above all, their feelings about living in a Polish society dominated by Catholics.

For analytical purposes, I introduced the distinction between two types of strangeness: subjective strangeness and mirrored strangeness. Subjective strangeness involves the belief that there is a key intrinsic difference between one's own group and the other group, and the perception of the other group via such categories as odd, strange, illogical, incomprehensible, or last but not least, simply repulsive and threatening. Mirrored strangeness is a belief held by one group that another group treats it as different, odd, incomprehensible, illogical, strange, or threatening.

I investigated both subjective and mirrored strangeness among Lutherans and members of the Orthodox church in Warsaw.

The evaluation of one's own situation in Polish society and the feeling of both types of strangeness among all three religious groups may be described as follows:

1) Both Lutherans and members of the Orthodox Church define their situation in these terms. Moreover, the minority situation is important for an understanding their identity. They seek an explanation for various elements of their position as the result of their particular minority status.

2) Certainly the feeling of powerlessness is a consequence of the previous point. However, Lutherans complain of powerlessness much more often than members of the Orthodox Church. Priests are practically the only people who are unhappy with this situation.

3) The other consequence is permanent anxiety, the feeling of being threatened by the dominant majority of Catholics. Most Lutherans and even more members of the Orthodox Church have had the traumatic personal experience of verbal or even physical abuse. As schoolchildren they used to be treated as strangers and were sometimes painfully ostracised.

4) Still another side of the image of the situation of one's own group is the feeling of being discriminated against. However, this opinion is expressed much more often by Lutherans than by members of the Orthodox Church. This can be understood in terms of the lower political and economic aspirations of the latter group.

5) The result of all these feelings is the compensatory glorification of one's own religious group. Generally Lutherans more often stress their self-confidence, what can be understood as the consequence of their relatively high social position (e.g., the high percentage of members with university education). Members of the Orthodox Church underline the greater spiritual value of their denomination.

6) Both religious groups declare the strong feeling that the Polish Roman Catholic majority treats them as non-Polish. I gave this the name of high mirrored strangeness, reflected distance. This is one of the most painful feelings connected with the asymmetry of social bonds. Lutherans,

as well as most members of the Orthodox Church, define themselves as Poles but have the simultaneous feeling that they are perceived as Germans (in case of Lutherans) and as Russians (in case of Orthodox). The stereotype of German=Lutheran and Russian=Orthodox is experienced by all of our informants.

VI

How can we explain this amazing phenomenon of Polish social consciousness? I suggest the role of several important factors.

The historical fortunes of the Polish nation have undoubtedly been responsible for the fact that for several centuries and certainly from the nineteenth century on, Roman Catholicism has been an important element in Polish national identity. During the partitions of Poland, the fact that the ruling foreign powers were of a different faith – Russians were Orthodox and Germans were usually Protestant – helped promote the idea that Polishness was connected in an organic way with Catholicism. Only the Austrian Empire was Roman Catholic; in the Austrian part of Poland, in ethnically mixed territories, Polishness found stronger support among Polish Lutherans than among Roman Catholics, the latter being more favored by the Austrian authorities. Moves by the ruling powers towards the de-ethnicisation (assimilation) of the Polish population usually included attempts to suppress the Roman Catholic faith. So the Catholic Church became an institutional support for the nationalist-patriotic and liberation movements.

From the nineteenth century on, Catholic church ceremonies acted as an occasion for the demonstration of national and political feelings which were often more important than purely religious emotions. We can see this tendency at work during the 20 years of the First Republic as well as during the 45 years of Communist rule.

Since the time of the first Polish state, the population of Poland has been Roman Catholic. The Reformation did not change this picture. However, one third of the multi-ethnic Poland of the Jagiellonian epoch (c. 1400-1780) and the first Polish Republic of 1918-1939 were made up

of ethnic minorities. A large number of these belonged to non-Catholic denominations. In the 19th and 20th centuries the connection between Polishness and Catholicism was an example of the use of religious criteria for the identification of people's ethnic affiliation within the Polish state.

After the Second World War, the majority of ethnic, and at the same time religious, minorities disappeared and Polish society became generally mono-ethnic and mono-religious. After the Second World War other Christian and non-Christian religions constituted small minorities, hardly visible in the public sphere.

In this social context, Poles who are not at the same time Roman Catholics really are the exception.

During the 45 years of atheist political authority the important role of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Catholic faith did not cease. Paradoxically, Communist rule strengthened the domination of one religion, because the Catholic Church was the only rival power which the political authorities had to take into account. During the last few decades, as today, it has been an important factor in the configuration of political powers ruling in Poland.

BORDERLAND IDENTITY. RELIGIOUS AND NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION IN THE POLISH-UKRAINIAN BORDERLAND

I. Introduction

After the collapse of Communism and the breakdown of the Soviet Union, ethnic and national relations in Eastern and Central Europe have approached a new stage. Newly independent nation-states need to find a new national identity. The new political situation demands a re-evaluation of history, and historical experience must be included in modern identity. Problems created by the existence of ethnic minorities, so difficult in the past, should, in the new European situation, also be treated differently than before.

Polish-Ukrainian relations, particularly difficult and bitter in the first half of the twentieth century, have a chance of being transformed into normal neighbourly contacts. But historical experience is not easy to overcome. Generations of older adults of both nations remember the bloody Polish-Ukrainian conflicts and cannot rid themselves of that bitter memory, even if they wished to do so. On the other hand, the younger generations have grown up in a national vacuum. This is particularly true in the case of young ethnic Ukrainians in Poland. Ethnic problems and questions of national identity were not discussed in school or in public life during the period of Communism. In the last few years ethnic socialization has been, at least

partially, included in the school curriculum. The growing range of activity of the Greek-Catholic (Uniate) Church, perceived both by Poles and by Ukrainians as a Ukrainian church, has contributed considerably to the development of Ukrainian national identification in Poland. Young people learn their ethnic traditions from their parents, but they also build their identities based on their own experiences, school curriculum, and participation in religious life. Polish culture is perceived by young ethnic Ukrainians as a dominating culture, but it also is a major element of attractive mass culture.

II. Centre – Periphery – Borderland

In my analysis of the role of religion and religious institutions in the process of the development of modern nations and nation-states in Eastern and Central Europe, I want to refer to Stein Rokkan's center-periphery theory [Rokkan 1975]. Rokkan has distinguished four major, or strategic sets of variables as the most important elements in nation/state building processes. These are: 1) political variables/institutions, 2) legal/law-system institutions, 3) economic system variables, and 4) religious norms/institutions. Each of these sets of variables/norms and institutions should be analysed in terms of their center-periphery dimension. It means that each element can be for a given national group, either central, i.e., the state/nation's own sovereign institution or it could be imposed from outside and be an element/part or means of foreign domination. "Center" means in such relations a situation where all four sets of strategic variables/norms and institutions are independent and sovereign for a given nation/state. Complete periphery could be defined as a situation where all four sets of norms/institutions are created or imposed by an external dominating system/center. In real social situations, full center and full periphery situations are rare. Relations between center and periphery are always dynamic and historically changing. Nevertheless, practically all European states and nations could be placed somewhere in this center-periphery dimension [Rokkan 1975].

If we look at the history of Eastern and Central European nations we can easily see that the majority of them were developed as peripheral regions, which were dependent, not only in their political and legal dimensions, but were also dominated by outside centers in their economic and cultural/religious dimensions. The influences of these centers were not equal in history. Some centers were multi-dominating, i.e., they dominated more than one major set of institutions while others dominated only one dimension. Also the length of these dominations varied considerably. All of these variations and overlappings of dominance/independence processes have created a multi-dimensional picture of nation/state formation processes in Eastern and Central Europe.

My initial hypothesis is that these four sets of institutions/norms distinguished by Rokkan are to some extent interchangeable. That means for example, a lack of political independence might create a significantly more important role for culture and religion in the national development of a particular national group. Those ethnic groups that remain politically and economically independent develop an ethnic nation, based predominantly on cultural and religious values. Those that successfully develop an independent state produce a political nation. This hypothesis is based on some simplifications, but, if proved to be correct, can explain some of the differences between nationalism and national consciousness of various East European nations.

My second hypothesis is that when a national group, developed in a concrete historical process as an ethnic nation, is subsequently successful in the development of its own sovereign, non-peripheral state, its cultural/religious dimension of ethnic identification will gradually (and/or relatively) decline, replaced by citizen/state identification, retaining many elements of national culture, but with more emphasis on language and art than on religion. On the basis of this hypothesis, it is possible to predict a changing role for religion in national identification.

Two opposite, and to some extent even contradictory processes, may be observed in contemporary Europe. On one hand, on the level of the political state, we see processes of supra-state/supra-national integration, the

development of international organisations, and the growing proliferation of borders, it could all be labeled as a process of globalisation. On the other hand, many regional, local (or lower-than-state) identities and organisations are successfully becoming distinct. In such situations borderland regions gain new significance. Borderland can be defined as: 1) a particular geographical area between two or more national/state cultural units, 2) an area where two or more social and cultural groups meet and influence each other, and/or 3) a place where a new type of culture (sometimes also a new type of identity and personality) is created. The borderland could be as sharp and clear as an almost visible line, or be a broad transitional area, with many overlapping shades of mutual social and cultural influences and interdependencies. The borderland is always a borderland of something – a state, nation, or culture. It is also possible to distinguish between a more or less symmetrical borderland, which is placed between two more or less equally developed, strong centers, and a typically peripheral borderland, in which one strong centre dominates a much less developed region.

A borderland as a region could be either passive, dominated by other centers, without its own cultural or social distinctiveness, or it could develop its own particular culture and identity. A borderland does not have to remain forever as a peripheral region. Many ethnic/national groups have been successful in gaining political independence and in changing their position from borderland/periphery to equal partnership. Recently Ukraine has been an example of such a successful transition from peripheral to more equal partnership relations with its neighbours.

Rokkan's center-periphery theory is far from sufficient to describe and explain the particular role of religion and religious identification in the process of the formation and change of modern nationalism and in national/ethnic identities in Eastern and Central Europe. Despite the fact that this area could be treated as a relatively homogeneous one in some political, economic, and social analyse, the region presents a great variety of relationships between ethnicity and religions. Among the ethnic groups in this region, there are some which demonstrate a strong relation between religious and national identity, and which have built their national

consciousness mainly or predominantly on the basis of religious distinctiveness. There are also other national/ethnic groups, where religion has played a much less important role in their national development and present national identity. But if we acknowledge the often-stressed important differences between Western and Eastern nationalism, we should also agree that one of the main differences between these two forms of nationalism is the role of religion and religious identification. In the nation-building processes of the West both institutionalised religion and individual religiosity played a much less significant role than in Eastern and Central Europe. Western nationalism was created mainly from above [Griffiths 1992] and was based more on political and economic distinctiveness than on cultural and religious differences. According to A. Smith [1994], western nationalism is much more territorial in character and is based more on citizen's loyalty to the state, with less reference to primordial ethnic belongingness. On the other hand, eastern nationalism is of predominately ethnic character. It is based on the myth of common ancestry and blood distinctiveness. Ethnic nationalism is "by nature" exclusive, much less tolerant of others, and in the contemporary political situation "produces" more ethnic refugees. Smith did not mention religion as one of the most common elements of eastern nationalism, but in his description of ethnic nationalism one can easily detect the significant role of primordial, sacred ties, which characterise both religious and ethnic primary communities.

When modern nations were developing in Western Europe in the nineteenth century, religious differences did not serve there as lines of social and ethnic divisions and conflicts. Western nations were built around, and associated more with, cultural, political, and economic interests and divisions more than religious differences. Religion was not a nation-building factor and a particular religion was not associated with particular nation or national consciousness.

In Eastern and Central Europe, new nationalisms in the nineteenth century could scarcely have been associated with the clear economic interests of various national groups. These interests were either not clearly defined and articulated, or they were mixed and dispersed [Gilberg 1992, Dunn 1987].

In most cases, nationalism was associated predominantly with the struggle for political national independence, and was usually connected with rather clear religious differences between the dominant political oppressor and the national groups demanding their independence. And what was of particular importance, national differences and national conflicts were growing not only between oppressing imperial powers on one side and national groups struggling for independence on the other, but also between the oppressed nations and national groups. Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Belorussians, and Lithuanians were all oppressed nations within the Romanov Russian Empire, but they also started to perceive each other as real or potential rivals and oppressors. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Poles and Ukrainians in Galicia competed for autonomy from Vienna and for local dominance in Galicia. Both nations were in a peripheral situation, but Poles dominated Ukrainians in economic, cultural, and political life. For modern Ukrainian nationalism, it was not politically dominating Austria, but the Polish struggle for independence that was a major problem. This problem became much more real after 1918, when Poland regained independence and dominated a large part of Ukrainian territory. Political dominance was associated with economic, cultural, and to some extent, also with religious dominance.

Communism, by its totalitarian character and its total confrontation with religion, underlined and clarified the dual (black-white, right-wrong, evil-good) picture of the world. Opposition and confrontation with communism also had to be based on a total opposition to this system and on a two-dimensional picture of communist reality. After the collapse of Communism such a dual picture may persist in the social consciousness of societies which have experienced this system. This gives some fundamentalistic religious orientations quite a good chance to increase their influence and popularity. The post-Communist world might be good soil not only for anti-Communist fundamentalism.

The other reason why relations between nationalism and religion in Eastern Europe are so important now, is a rapid growth in post-Communist societies of both national and religious activities and religious and national

identification. [Griffiths 1992, Zavgorodniy 1995]. There is also the growing significance of national and religious movements. It is not by accident that religion and nationalism are growing together, and that, directly or indirectly, they influence each other.

Post-Communist societies need strong internal mobilisation to achieve their major social and political goals, and to cope with the great difficulties they face. The rather sudden collapse of Communism has created a political and ideological vacuum in this part of Europe. It is, first of all, a political vacuum, particularly deep in newly created nation-states, like Ukraine or Belarus. There is also a great ideological and socioeconomic vacuum. The socialist system is (probably) finished, and a return to the previous system seems impossible. Something entirely new must be created. The collapse of the whole political system and the rapidly deteriorating standard of living, together with the destruction of broader international economic ties has created a real threat to social and political security. Such a situation often creates a necessity for strong national mobilisation. The examples of many social movements prove that social movements are not able to achieve their goals without nationalistic reinforcement and mobilisation.

There are several questions connected with the relationship between nationalism and religion in Eastern Europe. I am not able to answer all these questions, but nevertheless, I think it is worth putting them down in one place.

In what dimensions, and to what extent, did Communism, which had dominated this part of Europe during the last fifty years, influence the religious and national consciousness of the societies under its domination?

Is this currently very visible, religious revival in post-Communist Eastern and Central Europe a result of the suppression and persecution of religion under Communism? Will it subsequently decline in the near future, or is this religious revival an integral part of a long range social and political transformation in these societies?

What role will nationalism play in the process of social mobilisation? All post-Communist societies need such significant mobilisation to achieve their political and economic goals. Nationalism has proved to be very

effective in mobilising society. But could this national mobilisation go out of control and become more of an aggressive and destructive force than a constructive power?

What is the regional or national differentiation of the role of religion in the change in nationalism and national movements in Eastern Europe?

Are there any social processes and events in post-Communist Europe which could be labeled as a new nationalism? In other words, does the inexorable increase in recent years of national feelings, tensions, and conflicts in this part of Europe need new, specific methods of explanation, or is it possible to explain and to understand these new phenomena using methods and theories developed earlier?

Does history explain all? This question is the reverse of the previous question about contemporary reality as distinct from history. It is a question of justification of the theory that ethnic problems and conflicts in Eastern Europe persist in forms similar to those present fifty or sixty years ago kept in the so-called "refrigerator of history," and are now defrosted in these same forms and as a result of these same causes.

Are ethnic processes in post-Communist Eastern Europe specific and unique, considerably different from those in Western Europe or in other parts of the world?

Taking into account the main ethnic/national processes and trends, one may ask the question: is post-Communist Europe a homogeneous area, or on the contrary, should each country be analysed individually, with a particular consideration of its history, contemporary situation, ethnic composition, and religious differentiation?

To what extent could theories of ethnicity, developed earlier based on data provided by research on ethnicity in developed industrial societies, be useful in explaining recent ethnic revivals in post-Communist societies? I want to convert this question into the hypothesis that, despite many differences between Western and Eastern nationalism, there are also important similarities. Ethnic processes in Eastern and Central Europe will gradually evolve into forms known from the history of Western societies.

What role will religion play in these ethnic transformations? If we talk about a new nationalism in Eastern and Central Europe, should we also seek and discuss the new role of religion in the ethnic processes? If yes, what is new and specific in this religious significance?

III. The Polish-Ukrainian Borderlands – Religious and Ethnic Lines

It is not in error that I use the plural form when describing the current Polish-Ukrainian borderlands. We can distinguish at least three such borderlands. First, there is a historical or traditional borderland in south-eastern Poland and western Ukraine. In this area, Poles and Ukrainians met and mingled over the past several centuries. It was a predominately rural area and social relations were mainly typical of local peasant society. Historically, there were also class and social divisions, with Poles being at the top of the social ladder and Ukrainians usually on the lower rungs. This situation changed considerably after World War II.

Also in this same geographical area, we can distinguish a second Polish-Ukrainian social and cultural borderland – an urban one, currently most visible in the Polish town of Przemyśl and its surrounding voyevodship. Social and political relations between the two national groups in urban areas are considerably different than in traditional rural communities.

The third Polish-Ukrainian borderland is new, developed after 1947, when the majority of the Ukrainians from southeastern Poland were forcibly resettled to the northern and western parts of the country and dispersed. For more than ten years they were prohibited from returning to their homeland, and even when this ban was formally lifted, they faced many difficulties when trying to return. Many Ukrainians managed to return, but many remained in the new settlements and created more or less stable communities, with schools, religious communities, and organisational networks.

In this paper I concentrate mainly on the first, traditional rural Polish-Ukrainian borderland, and to a lesser extent on the second one, on urban ethnic relations in Przemyśl.

The Polish-Ukrainian borderland is generally a national borderland. That means that in this area members of two fully developed nations meet. But nation-building processes are seldom fully completed. National identification and national consciousness, as well as national ideologies, are in a process of constant transformation. During the last century there were many historical, political, and social changes which influenced considerably the national consciousness of both Poles and Ukrainians in this area. The Ukrainian national awakening was later than the Polish awakening – particularly in Galicia under Austrian dominance in the second half of the nineteenth century – and it was built around the Greek-Catholic (Uniate) Church and in opposition to Polish national, cultural, and economic dominance. The Greek Catholic Church was perceived by Ukrainians as their national church, in opposition not only to the Roman Catholic Church, seen as Polish, but also to the Eastern Orthodox Church, perceived as Russian.

In the period between the wars (1918-1939) when the western part, of what is today Ukrainian territory (Eastern Galicia), was in Poland, the growing Polish-Ukrainian national and political divisions were stated in terms of religion. But besides religious differences, there were also other important lines of division – cultural, political, and of course economic and class differences. In fact, religious differences were often relatively insignificant, particularly in ethnically mixed communities, where mixed Polish-Ukrainian and Roman Catholic-Greek Catholic marriages occurred frequently and national consciousness was not fully developed.

After World War II Polish-Ukrainian relations had changed dramatically. The change in borders and the mass resettlements of people, more often forced than voluntary, resulted in a significant decrease in minorities – Poles in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (a division of the USSR) and Ukrainians in Poland. Despite these changes, the Polish-Ukrainian borderland has remained as a geographical and cultural space in which members of two nations, finally fully independent after 1991, are in everyday contact. This borderland is considerably different from that which existed before 1939. Before World War II, Poles and Ukrainians were in a situation of “objective conflict.” Ukrainians struggled for an independent nation-state,

while Poles opposed these efforts, at least in those territories which belonged to Poland.

The current Polish-Ukrainian borderland has a much more symmetrical character than it had in history. This is because:

- Poland and the Ukraine are, for the first time in history, fully independent, sovereign countries and can develop equal mutual relations.
- The Ukrainian national consciousness is already developed, at least in its basic structure. This consciousness does not have to be built or rebuilt in opposition to Polish political, economic, and cultural domination.
- In current Polish politics and ideology, previously visible elements of national domination of Ukrainians and national hegemony are not present at all.
- Two major elements of “structural conflict” between Poles and Ukrainians, i.e., Polish objections to Ukrainian political independence and class economic Polish-Ukrainian conflicts, belong to history now.

The political and economic bases of Polish-Ukrainian conflicts have been considerably reduced but differences have remained. Where political and economic reasons for conflict have been reduced, cultural and religious differences become relatively more important. These differences do not necessarily lead to tension and conflict.

In Eastern and Central Europe, national consciousness was built on three main bases: a) history and historical consciousness, b) culture, in particular, language, and c) religion. In national borderlands, and especially in the case of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland after World War II, these three basic elements were unevenly and abnormally developed. Historical consciousness was “frozen” at a very bad moment in Polish-Ukrainian relations. Because discussion of modern history was officially hidden and banned, very negative stereotypes and national ideologies were petrified. In both Poland and the Soviet Ukraine, the political conditions for maintenance and development of the national cultures of minorities were very unfavourable. Religious freedoms, in particular, the official activity of the Greek Catholic Church, which was made illegal in the USSR (in Poland it was never

officially banned, but absorbed by the Roman Catholic Church) were considerably reduced. Religious freedom was much broader in Poland than in the USSR, but this freedom for Ukrainians was limited.

After 1989 considerable changes took place, but the legacy of the previous period will probably persist for long time. The national identification of ethnic-Ukrainians in Poland is changing, and the freedom to develop national culture is much broader, but the positive results of it will only be seen sometime in the future. Ethnic Ukrainians in Poland were partially assimilated, particularly in cultural and linguistic dimensions. National consciousness persisted, based mainly on bitter memories of Polish dominance and ethnic conflicts. The situation of ethnic Poles living in the Ukrainian Republic is in many aspects similar.

In such a situation, where economic, cultural, and linguistic differences are almost insignificant, religious differences became a primary factor in the process of drawing ethnic lines. The hypothesis, which was tested in empirical field research conducted from 1994 to 1996 in the rural area around Przemyśl, was formulated as follows: in the current ethnic process, and also in the near future, the crystallisation of national consciousness of ethnic Ukrainians in Poland, and also ethnic Poles in the Ukraine, would be based mainly on religion and religious differences. This does not mean that the role of religion in future ethnic processes will always remain so important. Other elements of national identification – language, culture, national ideology – would develop gradually, replacing religious identification. This process would be clearer in Poland than in the Ukraine.

IV. Field Studies

Empirical research was conducted in an ethnically and religiously mixed area in three local village communities. Historically this area was a predominantly Ukrainian (Ruthenian) settlement. Poles were in the minority, but up to 1939 all the large landownership was in Polish hands. Almost all Ukrainians belonged to the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church and outnumbered Polish Roman Catholic population 9:1. In 1947, when the Polish

communist authorities had decided to resettle the Ukrainian population, religion was used as the major, practically only, criterion of national membership. In the particular local situation it meant that all members of the Greek Catholic Church were listed for resettlement. However, if a person could prove that he or she had been baptised in the Roman Catholic Church, the resettlement order was lifted. The local Roman Catholic priest had agreed to issue a baptism certificate to all who asked for it. More than half of the Ukrainian local population did this, but they also agreed to join the Roman Catholic Church. They did not have a choice, however, because the local Greek Catholic church was closed. In 1958, it was reopened, but as an Eastern Orthodox (Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church). These two events – the closing of the local Greek Catholic Church and the opening, 11 years later of an Eastern Orthodox Church, created a deep religious and national split among the local Ukrainian population. Membership in a church strongly influenced their national identification. After almost fifty years, practically all the people who now belong to the Roman Catholic Church identify themselves as Poles, while those, who in 1958 joined the Eastern Orthodox Church, have a Ukrainian national consciousness. In many cases, even individual families are divided religiously and ethnically.

Among the inhabitants of these local villages, there are now only two, rather clear, national orientations – Ukrainian and Polish. The ethno-national category Rusyn (Rusin/Ruthinian), which was the dominant orientation of this region at the beginning of the twentieth century, practically no longer exists. When asked about Rusyns, the local Ukrainians usually answered: “there are no Rusyns here, Rusyns are in the eastern part of Ukraine, Rusyns are Russians.” Rusyns and Ukrainians were clearly distinguished, both by Poles and by Ukrainians. There was also another meaning of term “Rusyn,” as a primordial Eastern Slavic ethnic group, or supra-ethnicity, from which later on three separate nations were created: Russians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians. One point is clear – in this area there is no Rusyn ethnic identification. It was replaced mainly by Ukrainian identity, but in some cases also by Polish identity. In the case of Polish identity, it was predominantly the Roman Catholic religion, followed by Polish culture, which had played

a major role in this type of national conversion. Ukrainian identification has been built on a base that is broader than just religion, at least according to those interviewed. Many of them stressed the important role of kin and local history, of being from "here." This local or private motherland, "Here," connected with language, culture (but local culture based on religion rather than ideological national culture) did play important role. But, on the other hand, almost all the local Ukrainians, who converted in 1947 to the Roman Catholic Church, identified themselves in 1995 as Poles. Religion probably had played a much more important role than those interviewed had wanted to admit.

Why does religion play such an important role? There are several reasons for this. First, the national identity of the Greek Catholic locals who were forced to change their religion in 1947 was not clearly developed at that time. They identified themselves as "here" people or broadly as Rusyns. Second, local culture, in many aspects, including social and group organisations, kin relations, as well as language and seasonal and holiday celebrations, were based mainly on religion. Ukrainian national culture was not deeply rooted in peasant communities. Illiteracy was at that time high, access to high culture and to national treasures was limited. After World War II there were many restrictions of access to Ukrainian culture, including the school system and language. This situation is changing. The Ukrainian language is included in the local school curriculum. A Ukrainian high school was recently opened in Przemyśl. But the Ukrainian language is not used in everyday life, even nationally conscious parents speak to their children at home in Polish. Cultural differences between Poles and Ukrainians are very small or even insignificant, except for religion and religious culture. There are also no social differences; ethnic Poles and ethnic Ukrainians are peasants or peasant-workers, and their economic situation is similar.

Ukrainians in this local area have developed a "mirror national identity." They perceive themselves as Ukrainians because they are perceived such by their Polish neighbors. This definition is based mainly on religious differences. The Roman Catholic religion is called "Polish," while the Greek Catholic or Orthodox is called "Ukrainian."

My initial hypothesis, that in this local ethnically mixed community there is a strong relationship between religion and national identification, has been proved in empirical research. The majority of those people who, before 1947, belonged to the Greek Catholic parish and identified themselves as Ukrainian or "here" people, gradually developed a Polish national identity after changing religion. Currently, in 1996, there are some cases of religious reconversion, but they are rather rare. But again, return to the Greek Catholic Church also means a change in national identity, from Polish to Ukrainian. The majority of those who were forced to convert, now stay voluntarily in the Roman Catholic Church and keep their Polish identity.

On the other hand, those who belong to the Greek Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Church, have a clear Ukrainian identity. Some identify themselves as Polish-Ukrainians, which usually means loyal Polish citizens with a Ukrainian national identity. When asked what, besides religion, links them with the Ukrainian nation, they usually answer that it is kin "blood," primary bonds and family background.

Religion and national identity were clearly linked when those interviewed were asked about their attitudes towards religiously mixed marriages. The majority were against such marriages, but the reasons they gave were much more national than religious: "two nations should not sleep in one bed," or: "it is impossible to be a Ukrainian/Pole in the morning, and after changing religion (to get married) become a member of other nation in the afternoon." According to these people, changing religion meant also changing nationality. But despite these negative attitudes, mixed marriages occur more and more often.

The preliminary character of this research does not allow us to describe the full scope and character of national pluralism. What is clear, however, is the external pluralism of this community. By external pluralism I mean the situation where, in one community/group, there are people of various national identity, culturally different, living together without strong or permanent conflict. Internal pluralism [Smolicz 1979] means a situation where individuals are culturally/ethnically plural, i.e., when one person internalises two cultures, or at least a substantial part of two or more cultures. In this

local community the situation was asymmetrical. Many Ukrainians could be considered to be internally plural; they not only know Polish language, but could and did participate in the dominant Polish culture. Local Poles were generally non-plural internally, or plural only on a limited scope – they could understand and often speak Ukrainian, know some elements of Ukrainian culture, but it was only knowledge, not a part of their internal pluralistic culture. In comparison with homogeneously Polish communities, local Poles were much more sensitive to national and religious differences. The word “sensitive” also has a positive meaning here; they are also more tolerant.

If we look at generational differences and relations between the older and younger generation, we can see a rather natural, positive transmission of ethnic culture and ethnic traditions. Young people are ethnically conscious, and, generally, more open. They did not experience the bitter Polish-Ukrainian resentments and bloody conflicts of World War II and its aftermath. In the local atmosphere, relatively tolerant of national differences, young Poles and Ukrainians live in close proximity and not only tolerate each other but accept differences. Relations between the younger generation of Poles and Ukrainians are generally better than among their parents (but relations between the older generations are also rather good). There is only one element of national historical tradition, in which we can see some elements of national alienation – or alienation in national education. Young people do not usually inherit all of their parents’ or grandparents’ negative emotions and attitudes which developed during the Polish-Ukrainian conflicts of World War II and after. They are aware of them, but they build their own identity and Polish-Ukrainian relations much more on the contemporary situation and their own experience than on family traditions. Young Ukrainians are generally aware that their parents or grandparents have experienced a lot of injustice and cannot get rid of the bitter memory. On other hand, they treat it as a closed chapter in Polish-Ukrainian relations and try to build normal partnership relations with Polish majority. The independent Ukrainian state helps them a lot psychologically. This situation is in many aspects similar to the differences between the attitudes of younger and older Poles toward Germans. Young Poles generally know modern history and the

martyrology of the Polish nation under the Nazi occupation well. This memory does not prevent them from looking at contemporary Germany and Germans much more positively than their parents and developing normal neighbourly attitudes toward them. This is not national alienation – it is a natural re-evaluation of national attitudes and national stereotypes.

V. Urban Ethnic Relations – The Situation of Ukrainian Youth

In comparison with traditional rural social and religious traditions, Polish-Ukrainian relations in urban settings are in many aspects quite different. Ukrainians in Przemyśl are more spatially dispersed and not distinguishable in public relations. In rural areas they have mostly ascribed ethnic identity – Ukrainians are defined as separate ethnic group, even if they do not want to be perceived as Ukrainians (but generally they want to be). In urban settings ethnic status is mostly or predominately chosen – it is a matter of conscious choice to identify oneself as Ukrainian. Under Communism, when the Greek-Catholic (Uniate) Church did not formally exist, Ukrainians of the Byzantine rite belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. Access to Ukrainian culture was restricted, Ukrainians were discriminated against, and pressure for ethnic assimilation was strong.

After 1989, Ukrainians could keep their national distinctiveness, but, simultaneously, Polish-Ukrainian tensions, mostly over church and religious property and over the memory of World War II, became more visible. Young people from Ukrainian families are in a particularly difficult social situation, under dual pressure. They get ethnic Ukrainian socialization in their families, and now also have the possibility of attending grammar and high schools in the Ukrainian language. So they have the opportunity to develop and enrich their Ukrainian national consciousness and identity. On the other hand, they feel an ethnic distance towards, and negative stereotypes from, the Polish majority and also from their Polish peers. Ukrainian socialisation and attendance of Ukrainian school give rise to a certain marginalisation in the dominant Polish society. Polish culture is perceived by Ukrainians as a dominating culture and the Polish majority is seen as not very tolerant and

sometimes even hostile. Young Ukrainians also learn negative stereotypes of the Polish majority from their family traditions. As a result, we found three main ethnic/national orientations in our research among young people of Ukrainian descent: 1) Ukrainian national, 2) Polish assimilationist/pluralistic, and 3) ethnic/alienated.

Type 1, national Ukrainian identity, means full identification with the Ukrainian nation and the Ukrainian national minority in Poland. It usually also means full acceptance of the Ukrainian point of view and interpretation of modern Polish-Ukrainian relations. National Ukrainian univalence (exclusive acceptance of Ukrainian national values) is typical of such an attitude.

Type 2, the Polish assimilationist orientation, is typical of those young people who do not reject their national Ukrainian background, but who have developed strong positive relations with the dominant Polish culture. In their cultural orientation a clear multivalence (acceptance of both Ukrainian and Polish national cultures) is visible. But they perceive themselves as Polish citizens, the majority of their friends are Poles, and see their future in being Poles of Ukrainian ethnic background. That does not mean that in the future, in their personal development, Polish identity will prevail. It depends both on their personal situation and choice, but also on the progress of their full acceptance by the Polish majority.

Type 3, ethnic alienation, usually means a rejection of ethnic identity and withdrawal from participation in ethnic activity and ethnic culture. Alienated people often remain culturally marginal. They participate in Polish society and in Polish culture because they have to live in Poland, but they do not perceive it as their own culture. On the other hand, these people do not want to develop their Ukrainian culture and identity for various reasons.

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THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN THE PERSONAL IDENTITY STRUCTURE OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE POLISH-BELORUSSIAN BORDERLAND

Sociological studies conducted so far indicate the existence of a fundamental relationship between the sense of national identity and religion. In borderland areas the function of religion as a significant, if not the key element of national identity, is usually more important than outside such areas.

Difficulties with group identification occur more frequently in the borderland territories. Under the complexities of the borderland situation, religion often becomes a basic, or at least a very important, criterion of defining oneself and some members of the community within the category "ours" and labeling followers of other denominations as "strangers."¹ The key meaning of religion as a criterion of ethnic identity decreases in situations where the same religious identity is assumed by members of two or more ethnic groups. The diminishing role of religion may be followed by a tendency to treat it as "national."

The function of religion as a criterion of ethnic identity in borderland areas increases also when a territory and its population have experienced a variety of political rulers in the course of its history. Such historical

¹ Sadowski, A.: *Nations great and small. Belorussians in Poland (Narody wielkie i małe. Białorusini w Polsce.)*, Instytut Religioznawstwa, UJ, Kraków 1991, pp. 31-40.

experience increases the sense of the importance of local values among which religion has a basic place.² Inhabitants of the eastern border of Poland and within the Białystok region lived in pre-revolutionary times within the borders of the state of Czarist Russia. During the First World War they were temporarily under German occupation, then briefly under Russian occupation, and since the Second Republic of Poland came into existence in 1918, within the borders of the Polish state. From 17 September 1939 till 21 June 1941, they lived in the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, and experienced the enforced collectivisation of agriculture, as well as more brutal acts of deportation and other forms of totalitarian oppression, connected with attempts to Belorussify or Russify all the inhabitants. From June 1941 until July 1944, the region was occupied by Nazi Germany. The Red Army entered in July 1944, and after a short period of uncertainty, the region was eventually returned to Poland. The political situation was always far from clear. Representatives of the consecutive governments not only established new laws, but punished cooperation with the former authorities. Under such circumstances religion was often the single permanent, obvious, and natural factor enabling survival within one's own group.

As a rule, the position of religion in the borderland area increases when the situation leads towards confrontation, and decreases when the borderland becomes an area of multicultural coexistence.

The meaning of religion increases when faced with a real or imagined threat. All significant political changes in the whole country contribute to local divisions and differences, leading to tensions and the polarisation of attitudes. Thus, for example, in the presidential elections on 19 November 1995, the two main candidates received radically different results in two villages in the Catholic-Orthodox borderland.³ In the borderland, religious

² Ossowski, S.: Problems in the issues of regional and national bonds in Śląsk Opolski, in: *Dzieta*, vol. 3, PAN, Warszawa 1967, p. 280.

³ In Czyże 98.19% of voters supported Kwaśniewski, while in the neighbouring Wyszki Wałęsa received 81% of all votes. See: "Kurier Poranny", 1 December 1995, no 275.

identity apparently influences political preferences, even though the causes of such an extreme distribution of votes are more complex and would indeed require a thorough investigation. The function of religion in the shaping of national identity increases when religious divisions interact with other forms of separation, creating a highly polarised sociocultural structure. In the Polish-Belorussian borderland, national, class, and political divisions are imposed upon religious differences within the social consciousness, even though, in reality, none of the mentioned platforms relate directly to the other.

According to J. Chałasinski, a borderland territory is an area where national and state expansion is particularly concentrated. Hence, a more active and expansive national identity is expected from the inhabitants of borderland areas of a country than from the central part.⁴ Under such circumstances, strong attachment to religion serves to strengthen individual identity, especially in the sense of national identity.

Links between religious and national identities existing in the social consciousness strongly influence the sense of identity of the individuals within the population.

Identity is the broadest category used to describe the individual's perception of one's self as well as their distinction from others. "Identity is a part of the personality system which serves to sustain individual continuity by providing an internally consistent system of information about one's self."⁵ Identity is a category that refers to an individual. Definitions of identity underline the fact that identity is the feature of an individual which allows him to combine and organise into an internally consistent whole the variety of attributes which constitute an individual as a private and social being.⁶

⁴ Chałasinski, J.: *Polish-German hostilities in the town "Kopalnia" in Górny Śląsk*. Quoted after Kłoskowska, *Open and closed national attitudes in the borderland situations*, "Culture and Society" ("Kultura i Społeczeństwo") 1995, no 3 p. 19.

⁵ Dashefsky, A. ed.: *Ethnic Identity in Society*, University of Connecticut College Publishing Company, Chicago 1976, p. 5.

⁶ Compare: Kłoskowska, A.: *National identity and identification in historical and psychological perspective*, "Culture and Society" ("Kultura i Społeczeństwo") 1992, no 1, p. 138.

Identity is a phenomenon which provides a greater or lesser cultural continuity for an individual, and at the same time, due to its social nature, brings about changes within him.

The categories of "Identity" (tożsamość) and "Identification" (identyfikacja) are used interchangeably in studies concerning the sense of ethnic belonging. In this paper, after A. Kłoskowska, it is assumed that the notion of individual identity consists of a number of forms of identification. "Identifying relates an individual to various elements of intra-nationality and inter-nationality."⁷ Hence, within the notion of an individual identity, several sub-categories can be distinguished: self-identification with reference to nation, language, territory, religion, continent, but also profession, age, and gender.

Distinguishing between the categories of "Identity" and "Identification" allows us to show the locus of a given form of identification within a system of individual identity, as well as defining it with respect to others.⁸

This paper was prepared on the basis of sociological studies conducted at the end of 1994 on a representative sample of 1,122 respondents from the eastern part of the Białystok region, carried out through study questionnaires, and on a typical sample of 338 inhabitants of the Grodno region. The study concerned the sense of ethnic and cultural identity of the inhabitants of the Polish-Belorussian and Belorussian-Polish borderland. The specific purpose of the study was to establish the basic forms of ethno-cultural identity of the population in the new socio-political conditions. This paper aims to answer the question of the place of religious identity within the individual identity of the respondents, based on several indices.

The study questionnaire asked the respondents to answer a question typically used in studies on individual identity: "Who are you first of all?" The question was half-open, but asked in such a way as to encourage the respondent to provide the initial answer. The interviewer's task was to

⁷ Kłoskowska, A.: *National conversion and national cultures*, "Culture and Society" ("Kultura i Społeczeństwo") 1992, no 4, p. 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

qualify the answer as one of the categories provided for the question. Only when the respondent had difficulties in answering the question did the interviewer assist him by reading the categories suggested by the study questionnaire. The feedback from the interviewers informed us of a frequent necessity of actually reading the provided list of categories.

The answers received enable us to answer the question as to how the respondents perceive themselves against the background of the community in terms of the categories of social roles, and to indicate the hypothetical place of the religious identity as compared with other forms of individual identities.

Table 1

Religious Identity Compared to other Forms of Individual Identity (%)

I. Who are you first of all?	Polish-Belorussian borderland			Belorussian-Polish borderland		
	Poles	Belo- russians	Total	Poles	Belo- russians	Total
1. Human	72,4	69,1	71,8	68,7	86,1	81,7
2. A Christian (Roman Catholic, Orthodox etc.)	31,6	31,5	31,19	27,1	12,2	15,4
3. A Pole (a Belorussian, etc.)	27,3	16,4	25,7	18,7	11,1	11,8
4. A man (a woman)	22,0	16,6	22,4	32,3	22,2	24,0
5. An inhabitant of...	8,6	6,7	8,9	6,3	6,7	5,3
6. A European	8,5	3,0	8,0	5,2	2,8	3,2
7. Others...	1,2	0,6	1,4	1,0	1,1	1,5

The answer chosen most frequently to define individual identity was "I am a human," indicating a general human identity. In other words, the most frequently indicated group identity was the one definitely exceeding the sense of belonging to any of the socio-cultural groups occurring in a given community. These other forms of group identity were indicated much less frequently.

Differences between respondents from the Polish-Belorussian border area and the Belorussian-Polish border area were also observed. Respondents from Belarus chose the general human identity more frequently.

Respondents from the Polish-Belorussian borderland pointed to religious identity as the second most important category, followed by national and sex identities. Territorial and continental identities were rarely indicated.

Respondents from the Belorussian borderland indicated gender identity as the second category, then religion and nationality. Territorial and continental identities were chosen equally rarely.

Interviewers reported the respondents' frequent difficulties with providing a short answer to such a complex question. Possibly the order in which the categories were listed influenced the choice of answer. Still, the listing of answers could not have influenced the extremely wide gulf in frequency of choices between the first and the subsequent categories.

A general sense of human identity appears to be the dominant category of identity, i.e., the sense of identification with other people regardless of their group affiliations. Religious and national identities occupy the second, subjectively lower, position in the hierarchy of the individual sense of identity. The primary status of the sense of common identity in the category of "human," disregarding other characteristics, may be explained on, at least, two levels. These answers can be interpreted as the expression of the respondents' desire to live in a world which is simple and easy to understand, governed by an "obvious" system of hierarchy and rules, in which social behaviour meets expectations held by members of local communities. The choice of this category may refer to the common use of the phrase "be a human" as used in small communities, really standing for the demand for behaviour according to the norms and values of the local culture.

The primary status of the sense of identity in the general human category may also be indicative of the desire of the inhabitants of borderland areas to reject the existing social divisions and to support those attitudes which connect people, rather than divide them. Characteristically, many respondents of both the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox faiths opted for the answer "I am a Christian," thus indicating a desire to feel

religious identity with those who, according to the objective criteria of their denominations, are to be treated as different.

In the Belorussian-Polish borderland, gender identity was chosen as the second most important, after the general category of human. The respondents opted for this category more than three times less frequently. This result seems to indicate a certain distance towards, or even rejection of, those forms of identity which lie between the sense of general human identity, and experiencing one's self. National and religious identity came as the third and the fourth categories, selected by 15.4% and 11.8% of all respondents, respectively.

The answers obtained may be interpreted in at least two ways. They show the role of national and religious ties to be less significant in Belarus than in Poland. Many noticeable indices confirm the observation that the Belorussian sense of national identity is still in a formative stage, being promoted by patriotic movements and the state. Secondly, however, the distribution of answers may also indicate still-existing prejudices and a lack of acceptance of the processes that are leading religious and national identities to replace the ideology and state doctrines of the former Soviet empire. The lack of acceptance of religious and national ties may, though it seems paradoxical, be the result of patriotic incentives. The religious and national ties present in the territory of Belarus keep the various cultural groups together, but they also divide the population of Belarus into a variety of sub-categories, such as Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and other religious denominations, as well as Belorussians, Poles, Ukrainians, and representatives of the other 123 ethnic groups living in Belarus.

Hence, the results obtained in communities of a rather traditional character may be also interpreted as an escape from the complexity of the outside world and towards a local community characterised by a structure which is simple and easy to understand with acknowledged rules of behaviour.

National and religious diversity at the level of local communities is visibly less than the large-scale differences between nations and cultures.

A. Kłoskowska underlined the importance of differentiating between direct contacts in ethnic border areas and the “neighboring” of cultures. National cultures as correlates of whole societies, governed by separate state systems, are neighbors on a global scale. Proximity in space facilitates cultural contacts and the exchange of values, but it does not determine which culture will dominate in such relations, which could be described as “resulting from choice.”⁹

Relations between two institutionalised cultures represented by specialists, leaders, or even by the state, are quite different from relations in small, usually well-integrated communities, within which positive norms of multi-ethnic coexistence have developed.

Near the small town of Narew, in the Białystok region, there are two villages, Rohozy and Iwanki, closely linked with each other. Rohozy has long been a Roman Catholic village with traditions of nobility, while Iwanki is peasant and Orthodox. In the period between the world wars, the Seventh Day Adventists appeared, commonly called “subotniki” (the Saturday people). In a journalistic account prepared on the basis of interviews with the inhabitants of Rohozy–Iwanki, the following fragments can be found: “We never got in the way of one another... They are even getting married with the others... I have nothing against them. They are decent people and have never hurt anybody, but it should be remembered never to attempt to borrow anything from them on Saturdays. They will refuse. Not out of meanness, but because their faith tells them so. The next day, on a Sunday, they will lend you whatever you may need.”¹⁰ The phrase to be underlined is “it should be remembered.” Inhabitants of small communities are usually well-informed about each others’ ways. They know what should and what should not be done, how to interpret the seemingly unfriendly behaviour

⁹ Kłoskowska, A.: *Neighbouring of cultures and training in reciprocity*, “Culture and Society” (“Kultura i Społeczeństwo”) 1991, no 4 p. 4.

¹⁰ Łozowska M., Dworkowski S.: *God gives rain, God will dry. One village, four parishes (Bóg zmoczy, Bóg wysuszy. Jedna wieś cztery parafie)*, “Kurier Poranny” 1994, no 246.

of a neighbour classified as "different." These different behaviour patterns have long become part of the familiar local diversity.

Frequently an external observer, instead of trying to learn about a community, brings with him his own notions of cultural diversity and pre-formulated expectations of social divisions. There is a tendency to look for confirmation of these presuppositions when studying attitudes and behaviour. Journalists, politicians, even interviewers, by pushing the issues of differences too strongly and ignoring signals to the contrary, run up against a wall of silence, an unwillingness to discuss the subject. Answers indicating a harmonious coexistence or a lack of differences appear less frequently. It is a defense mechanism against attempts to interpret differences out of proportion with reality. The defense mechanisms of small communities seem to be an important cause for the predominance of a sense of general human identity when compared to other categories of identity in the mentality of the respondents studied in the eastern borderland.

The second index of individual identity studied through the sense of social roles was the question of group ties. Group bonds that affect an individual offer another – this time rather indirect – method of studying group identities, including religious identities. Belonging to a given group is understood as maintaining certain bonds and relations with the group. The range of relations which an individual has with a given group determines the importance of the group for him.

The item on the questionnaire opened with the statement: "In the life of each person there are people and groups of particular significance." Next the respondent was asked to choose these groups with which he feels particularly connected. The question was meant to indicate group bonds within the studied communities from the point of view of an individual, and then the place of religious bonds within this arrangement.

Table 2

The Place of Religion Within the System of Group Bonds

	Borderland, national identity			
	Polish-Belorussian borderland		Belorussian-Polish borderland	
People or groups with which you feel closely connected:	Poles	Belo-russians	Poles	Belo-russians
1. Family members and relatives	92,0	94,5	94,8	90,0
2. Friends	69,9	75,2	51,0	52,2
3. Neighbours	46,4	61,2	21,9	15,6
4. Inhabitants of my village/town	27,1	40,0	11,5	10,0
5. Members of my parish	15,9	24,8	5,2	1,1
6. Inhabitants of the Białystok (Grodno) region	15,2	19,4	3,1	3,3
7. People of the same religion	18,7	38,2	10,4	3,9
8. Polish nation (Poles)	27,3	19,4	11,5	8,9
9. Belorussian nation (Belorussians)	1,9	18,8	10,4	15,5
10. Other	2,5	3,0	2,1	1,7
11. I do not feel connected with any group	0,3	0,4	0,0	3,3

The groups of primary significance for all respondents are family members and relatives, as well as friends and acquaintances. This arrangement forms the primary and permanent system of group bonds in the communities studied. Small rural communities, characterised by an insignificant percentage of outsiders, function mostly within family bonds (blood relations) and friends (a group of choice). The next type of relations refers to neighbours and inhabitants of one's village. Thus, the territory of the community covers the basic system of group bonds of the communities studied, on both sides of the border, assuming that the majority of relatives and friends live within the same village or town.

In the Polish-Belorussian borderland the bonds and social contacts within the areas of rural communities appeared relatively stronger, and were chosen more frequently by Belorussians than by Poles. Ethnic divisions in the eastern part of the Białystok region run more frequently between villages than through a given village. Hence, granting more importance to neighbourly and other local bonds by Belorussians results partly from the sense of ethnic separateness of one's "own" people in relation to "others."

In the Belorussian-Polish borderland, neighbourly bonds received a much lower percentage of choice. Compared to the eastern part of the Białystok region, local ties in the Belorussian borderland are much weaker, and have undergone a stronger process of disintegration. They seem relatively more stable among Polish communities.

Significant differences concerning other group identities between Poles and Belorussians were also observed on both sides of the border.

The main identity groups outside of village ties felt by Poles in the Polish-Belorussian borderland are, first, the Polish nation, then the members of the same Church, then members of one's own parish and, finally, inhabitants of the Białystok region. On the other hand, the main external identity groups for Belorussians in the Polish-Belorussian borderland are the Church, the parish, inhabitants of the Białystok region, the Polish nation, and finally, the Belorussian nation. For Belorussians in the Białystok region, beyond the bonds of the local community, the basic category of identification is the Orthodox religion assimilated in two dimensions: a sense of belonging to the category of "Orthodox," related to the Orthodox inhabitants of the Białystok region (ethnic – regional ties), and the feeling of ties with the members of one's own parish.

The results obtained support the hypothesis that the Orthodox religion, although to a lesser extent than in the past, still constitutes a basic component of the cultural identity of Belorussians living in the Białystok region. The dominant position of the Orthodox faith within the cultural canon of Belorussians suggests that both further transformation of the present Belorussian ethnic identity towards consolidation of Belorussian national values and also forming other national affiliations remain open possibilities.

Both Belorussians and Poles expressed relatively significant attachment to the Białystok region (territorial bonds).

The basic external attachment expressed by Poles in the Grodno region were related to the Polish nation, the Belorussian nation, and to the Church. In the equivalent range of attachments, Belorussians from the Grodno region expressed sense of identity with the Belorussian nation and with the Polish nation. Religious identities were definitely less significant.

The observed arrangement of group ties as perceived by individuals bears witness to the phenomenon that neither religion nor nationality form the one and only dominant bond, even though significant differences occur resulting from national or state identity. It is natural that the specified social groups and categories with which respondents feel a sense of identity are not connected by either disjunctive or contradictory relations. Usually various types of group bonds overlap and create a diverse and mutually connected whole. It seems that the relatively low percentage of choice of the national category confirms the assumption that local ties will dominate. It is also likely that national identity is accomplished through these local ties.

Poles in the Polish-Belorussian borderland indicated national identity more frequently than religion. The results obtained show that national and religious identities do not overlap. The sense of national identity to a large extent becomes independent of religious identity. This situation is largely brought about by the existence of ethnic Poles of the Orthodox faith as well as by the processes of autonomy of national and religious values, characteristic of industrial society.

Among the representatives of ethnic majorities, the need to identify with church communities and religious values receives a much lower position in the hierarchy of the elements of individual identity when compared to local and national values. Among minorities, it reaches second place after family and local ties. In the latter case, the importance of religious identity increases because it largely overlaps with ethnic identity, together forming a basic element of ethno-cultural identity.

Some clarification also seems necessary to explain the simultaneous choice of ties with both neighbouring nations. The need to identify with the

Polish nation in the Polish-Belorussian borderland is accompanied by a feeling of distance towards Belorussians and Belorussian values (only 1.9% of all Poles feel attachment towards the Belorussian nation), while Belorus in the Białystok region feel the same attachment towards both the Belarussian and the Polish nations. This is indicative not only of ties with the "Belorussian nation" and "the Polish state," but also expresses the real attachment towards both nations, a kind of national ambivalence of those respondents who identify themselves as Belorussians.

Hence, being a Belorussian does not constitute a system of values separate from Polishness, but becomes a set of values transitional between Belorussians and Poles. The bond with the Polish nation constitutes an important sociocultural reference in the process of national self-identification of Belorussians in the Białystok region. Apparently this is a new, hitherto unnoticed finding in studies of the sense of national identity of ethnic Belorussians in Poland. This finding is validated by the observation that ethnic Belarus in Poland do not manifest their attachment to the state of Belarussia as their motherland and the political organisation of their nation. Hence their needs in the two categories of the nation and the state are to a different extent connected with the Polish state and the Polish nation. It should also be noticed that the Polish national identity expressed by Belorussians is generally deprived of the religious content.

In the Belorussian-Polish borderland, both Poles and Belorussians to a large extent express their attachment to the Belorussian and the Polish nations, although attitudes of national ambivalence are more frequently observed among Poles as representatives of a national minority. Representatives of national minorities on both sides of the border to a similar extent indicated ties with the mother nation and the nation of the majority.

The complicated situation of national minorities brings them into close relations with the dominant culture, and, consequently, towards the acquisition of cultural attributes of the majority group. Thus an ethnic minority may feel a growing attachment to the dominant nation and its culture, eventually undergoing a process of assimilation to the point of complete identification.

Religion loses its historical primary position in contributing to the sense of national identity of both Poles and Belorussians on either side of the Polish-Belarus border, being replaced by a sense of identity expressed through the general category of human, or local and national identity.

Among Poles in the Białystok region this situation is caused by the process of autonomy affecting national values with respect to religion, as well as by the processes of assimilation of many Orthodox into the Polish nation. Among Belorussians, religion also ceases to be the basic criterion of ethnic identity, being replaced by values which are local, generally human, or national Belorussian and Polish, even though religion retains its relative position as a criterion of group identity.

This process does not occur in only one direction. Religion, similar to ethnic values, is affected by processes of domination or recession, which means that in some situations, which are perceived by the group as threatening, religious values may again become primary.

Hence we deal with complicated processes of evolution of the place of religion in the system of individual identity in a population for which, in the past, religion was frequently the only criterion of an identity separate from the outside world. Today religion is still important, but its role is undergoing constant modifications and is one of many elements constituting the multi-dimensional individual identity.

Vanda Rusetskaya

INTERETHNICAL RELATIONS AND THE RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION OF THE POPULATION OF BELARUS

The breakdown of the Soviet Union has led to the emergence of new political realities. However, when it comes to national self-consciousness, the stereotype of the existence of "the Soviet man" remains.

On the basis of a study of international relations, ethnic and cultural processes in Belarus carried out by the Department of Sociology of Culture of the Institute of Sociology, according to the republic-wide framing sample of 1994, we may largely clear up two stereotypes of mass consciousness in ethnic and cultural relations. The Belorussian and Russian cultures have the greatest significance for Belarus, while the others hold subordinate positions.

The majority of the respondents, 72.8%, demonstrated a good knowledge of Belorussian traditions and customs, while 68.7% have a good knowledge of Russian and 21.2% of Ukrainian customs, 11.1% of Polish, 5.4% of Jewish, 4.2 % of Lithuanian, and 2.4% of Gypsy customs. Other cultures are absolutely unknown to the respondents. The existence of the two dominant cultures in the Republic led to the removal of all other cultures whose bearers formerly lived, or are living, in Belarus from the provinces of spiritual life.

What are the reasons for such a situation? First of all, many people were not able to know any other culture because of the impossibility of finding them in the cultural spectrum of the republic.

Substantial damage to the existence of the varied spectrum was caused by the official ideology, the lifelessness of which was so abruptly demon-

strated by the breakdown of the Soviet Union. When official ideological doctrine announced the creation of a unique historical community of people, "the Soviet people," there was no need to declare national priorities. For a certain time the ideological dogmas were able to suppress them under the weight of the objective processes.

National consciousness is a unique phenomenon where the love of the Motherland, of the little country, of the land of the ancestors, respect for the surrounding world, including other nations and cultures, can grow, even if someone would like to invent something universal – a common culture.

According to our study, approximately one quarter of the respondents (24%) declared that they were witnesses of disrespectful attitudes towards people of other nations, 49.4% reported that they met this phenomenon rather seldom, and only one quarter of the respondents claimed to know nothing about it.

Where and when may one find disrespectful attitudes toward people of other nationalities most often? The lowest rate (3.7%) was in such institutions as clinics, hospitals, and the workplace. Among friends it is also not high (8.2%). At school and with neighbours it is 11.4% and 11.9%. These are where people do their common business and share their common misfortunes, where they know each other for a long time and there is little room for intolerance towards the representatives of other nationalities. The most disrespectful attitudes toward "aliens" may be found at the market (35.6%) and on public transport (34.6%). These are where there is a crowd, where there is an element of spontaneous feelings and action. Under the influence of involvement and imitation, intellect and reason give way to destructive and very often aggressive emotions. These manifestations increase each time they happen and become particularly dangerous.

Moreover these manifestations are rooted in a deep social and economic crisis, which leads to chaos in the economy and to the reduction of people's standard of life. According to official statistical data, the incomes of the richest strata of people (10%) are 16 times greater than that of the poorest ones, but really this figure should be doubled, that is, 30 times. In such a situation there is a temptation to explain the facts from the position of

social comparison, what F. Nietzsche called "resentimento," that is, the feeling of mistrust, of bitterness, towards all that is "not ours, another's, and hostile." This phenomenon finds a lot of manifestations, and in our case it really embodies the distrustful and sometimes even hostile attitude towards people of other ethnic groups and cultures.

Let us take another tack on the same problem – the relationship between ethnic groups, their interaction in the spiritual, cultural, and religious spheres. These manifestations appear in a variety of forms and the specifics of this or that region, the ethnic and national structure of its population, exert a rather visible influence on them.

The features of the ethnic environment in these regions affects international relations as well as the character, content and direction of not only the religious, but also ethnic and national identification of persons and groups. And what is more, the processes of ethnic and national identification in multi-component international environments like Belarus and, in particular, the Grodno and the Brest regions, not only superimpose, but interweave. The more the person or social group is rooted in the national culture, the more firm and organic is the relationship of the religious and ethno-national identification. It is significant that amongst Lithuanians in the Grodno region, 2/3 of the respondents (66%) identify religious holidays with national tradition, while only 31% or 1/3 of Jews, less rooted in the prevalent national culture of this area, so identify them.

The representatives of different ethnic groups characterise belonging to a particular religion in their own way as a criterion of national self-identification. For example, 67% of respondents identify adherence to Catholicism as belonging to the Polish nationality, and 36.5% correlate Orthodoxy with the Belarus nationality. Of course, in this case, the homogeneity of religion in Poland is expressed more intensively than in Belarus. If we take such a criterion of national identification as a personal identification with being a Belorussian or Pole, the differences lose their substantial significance. Of those who responded, 91.3% consider that they may identify themselves with Belarus and be called Belorussian, and 91.9% respondents identify themselves with Poland and the right to be called a Pole. The respondents' evaluations

of such criteria as the organic relationship with the history and culture of their nation or the use of language (Belorussian or Polish) are very similar.

But such criteria as residence in Belarus or Poland, or citizenship in these countries appear substantially different in the statements of Belorussians and Poles. Residence in Belarus has essential importance for 42.2% of our Belorussian respondents in their identification with Belarus and three times less (15%) for our Polish respondents. Citizenship in the corresponding country is very important for 58.8% of Belorussians, and half as many Poles.

Our study shows the essential differences in the content of the correlation of the ethnic relations and religious identification. If in the Grodno region the identification of Catholicism with Poles and Russians and Belorussians with Orthodoxy is extremely widespread, in the sample gathered from the whole republic, there is no such accent. According to this sample, where the majority of people live in the eastern areas of Belarus, only one in ten respondents identify Russians and Belorussians with the Orthodox faith, and Lithuanians and Poles with the Catholic one. The absolute majority (more than 70%) do not consider it necessary to identify Russians and Belorussians with Orthodoxy, and almost 76% need not identify Poles and Lithuanians with Catholicism.

Unlike Roman Catholicism, there is no numerical superiority of any nationality amongst adherents of the Greek-Catholic Church in Belarus. The majority of the respondents (44%) identify the Greek-Catholic faith as belonging to Ukrainians, 41.9% to Belorussians, 23.5% to Poles, and 2.5% to Russians. We may make the conclusion that the reasons spread by certain intellectuals for considering the Greek-Catholic faith (the Uniate Church) the genuine national denomination of Belarus are ungrounded. Their opinions reflect neither the specifics of the national structure of the corresponding groups of believers nor the peculiarities of the given confession, being one of the world's religions which do not belong strictly to any nation.

As to the identification of the Evangelical Christian Baptists with this or that nationality, one may show a more smooth picture. Of those who responded, 35.6% identify them as Belorussian, 35.6% as Russians, 17.8% as Ukrainians, and 11% as Poles.

A peculiar panorama of identification was revealed towards Jews according to the national index. Three quarters of the respondents, 73%, identify them as belonging to Judaism, 5.2% suppose that they may belong to the Orthodox Church, 3.5% to the Christian Baptists, 2.3% to the Roman Catholic Church, and 1.2% to the Greek Catholic Church.

Such is the social mosaic of the ethno-national and ethno-religious self-identifications of people and social groups in modern Belorussian society. One may stress two key tendencies. The first consists of the substantial differentiation of the structure and direction of ethnic and religious identification in different areas that depend considerably on the preponderance of people of a certain nationality and religion in the structure of the population of this or that region. The second one is that in the correlation of ethno-religious identification and interethnic interactions, cooperative ties that induce inter-religious and interethnic agreement and collaboration prevail over confrontational components which lead to inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts.

II. THE NEW FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS AND CHURCHES

Michael P. Hornsby-Smith

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE VIEW FROM WESTERN EUROPE

I. Introduction

The manner in which the Roman Catholic Church has adapted to the collapse of the previous totalitarian communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 and the ending of a period during which a fortress mentality might have been appropriate is of considerable sociological interest. This paper offers a consideration of these issues from the perspective of Western Catholicism three decades after the emergence of a new openness to the world, legitimated by the Second Vatican Council, but also seventeen years after the accession of Pope John Paul II whose formative years had been devoted to the struggle for the survival of religion in a hostile and anti-religious communist state.

This chapter has two main aims. First, it will consider the extent to which the experiences of the Roman Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe in recent years confirm the predictions of orthodox secularisation theory. Second, it will offer some tentative reflections on the adaptation of these Churches from the perspectives of Catholicism in Western Europe three decades after the end of the Second Vatican Council.

II. Modernisation and Secularisation

Among social scientists generally, the secularisation thesis in an age of industrialisation, modernisation, rationalisation, bureaucratisation, and urbanisation is "the conventional wisdom" (Hammond, 1985: 1). David Martin, an early and robust critic of the ideological uses attributed to the concept (1965) subsequently modified his position in his *A General Theory of Secularisation*. He noted "certain broad tendencies towards secularisation in industrial society (which) have been fairly well established." These include the impact of heavy industry, areas which are homogeneously proletarian, increasing urban concentration, geographical and social mobility which contribute to a relativisation of perspectives, and increasing social differentiation in society, within the Church, and in terms of the individual's lifestyle. Martin regards these as "universal processes" in the sense that they contribute to secularisation "other things being equal" (1978: 2-3). Of course, other things never are entirely equal and his book is a painstaking mapping of the variations between different societies in terms of key "crucial events" such as the outcome of civil war, the legacy of the Reformation, revolution, and the relationship of religion to the growth of nationalism and cultural identity.

A similar position is taken by Wallis and Bruce. They suggest that the "orthodox model" of secularisation "asserts that the social significance of religion diminishes in response to the operation of three salient features of modernisation: (1) social differentiation, (2) societalisation, and (3) rationalisation" (1992: 8-9). However, there may be countervailing factors such as cultural defence, where "religion can provide resources for the defence of a national, local, ethnic, or status-group culture" (ibid: 17), and cultural transition, for example, in the case of the migration of ethnic groups. Wallis and Bruce observe that Poland was an obvious case where "the Church has provided a central focus of cultural identity in opposition to an imperialistic neighbour which sought to impose an alien set of cultural values and identities upon a reluctant populace" (1992: 16). Michel (1991: 82) notes: "to go to Mass on Sunday or to take part in a pilgrimage is also, in a country

where there is no electoral consultation worthy of the name, a way of voting with one's feet." The implication of these studies is that where "religion finds or retains work to do other than relating individuals to the supernatural" (Wallis and Bruce, 1992: 17), the incipient secularising tendencies to be found in modernisation processes will be held in check. Conversely, where religion is no longer required to provide a focus for cultural defence, secularisation can be anticipated.

It is important to clarify what secularisation theorists understand by the term. Wilson defined it as "the process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions..." (1966: xiv) or "by which religious institutions, actions and consciousness, lose their *social* significance" (1982: 149; emphasis added). He stresses that while religious consciousness, individuals and institutions may persist, it no longer has significant economic or political influence (1982: 155; 151).

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the years following the collapse of communist rule provide an excellent test case for the secularisation theories of David Martin and Patrick Michel.

III. Politics and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe

David Martin (1978) interpreted the struggle of religion in Eastern Europe up to the mid-1970s in the context of a "pattern of secular monopoly." In his comprehensive review, he focuses in particular, on the case of the Catholic Church in Poland,¹ noting the greater availability of research findings there. He stresses that Polish history has been a constant struggle against outsiders (1978: 18). The consequence is that Poland provided a partial exception to the vicious spiral of religious decline in the face of modernisation because Catholicism has been regarded as the symbol of

¹ Changes in the Catholic Church in Poland since the collapse of Communism will be considered more fully in Hornsby-Smith (forthcoming).

a repressed culture (ibid: 42) and "constantly experiences the continued after-effects of standing against rather than standing for authority" (ibid: 55). Poland is an example of an independent nation "where threatened identity and autonomy has had to be mediated by religion" (ibid: 77).

Two matters, in particular, are relevant for our present purposes. First, what were the implications of Soviet hegemony for relations between the Church and the state? There is general agreement that Poland represents a special case (Strassberg, 1988). Martin's analysis (1978: 36-38) is extremely complex. He notes that in Poland, the Catholic Church had been so strong that it constituted "an element of semi-recognised political opposition, even indeed of limited criticism." The Polish state had been "unable to crush the Church without enormous upheavals and unacceptable breaks with the Polish past" (ibid: 210). But in a prescient footnote he predicted that "a Church straightforwardly incorporated in the power structure will be involved in the ruins of that structure" (ibid: 96, footnote 16).

A second consequence of the struggle against alien influences from outside is that internal conflicts over religion, for example, over the interpretation and implementation of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, have been muted "by the paramount need for unity" (ibid: 42). Thus the Church "minimises the impact of the (Second) Vatican Council because this could create divisions for the government to exploit" (ibid: 138). Martin notes that the conciliar reforms have made "less progress where there is an external threat against which unity is essential, as in Poland, or where the majority of Catholics are of low status or peasants or of the old middle class" (ibid: 156).

In sum, Martin's analysis leads to a number of predictions about the consequences of a collapse of the communist form of totalitarianism. First, the process of secularisation, which is a normal consequence of industrialisation, will materialise. Second, because of its former symbiotic relationship with the communist regime, the Church will inevitably be damaged by the collapse of the latter. Finally, with the ending of the era of the "fortress" Church, there is no longer any need for the Church to maintain a disciplined unity, and the challenges of the Second Vatican Council, which

the Churches in the West have had to face over the past three decades, must now be addressed by the Polish Church. Increasing internal divisions are inevitable in spite of the Pope's hope that his homeland would "serve as an example of true Catholicism, a "people's Catholicism," for the materialistic and permissive West" (Bernstein and Politi, 1996: 343).

As Martin points out, "Czechoslovakia is a different sort of case" and "the relationship of Catholicism to the national consciousness is more ambiguous" (ibid: 103; 102) because the Counter-Reformation had restored Catholicism while leaving the national "myth in the hands of a beaten minority" (ibid.: 108; Wolchik, 1991: 11-12, 212-216).

Historically, Slovak nationalism has been of importance for at least 150 years. In the liberal state of Czechoslovakia created after the First World War it was fed from three sources: a belief in the economic exploitation of Slovaks, their under-representation in the administrative elites and the army, and their distrust of "the Hussite and atheistic traditions of the Czechs" (ibid: 146). Catholicism in Slovakia, as in Poland, constitutes "a means of affirming national consciousness" (Michel, 1991: 6; Steiner, 1973: 23-33). Religious alienation was always more prominent in the Czech Lands, partly due to a tradition of indifference since the time of the forcible conversion of the Huttites to Catholicism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and partly due to the greater industrialisation than in Slovakia.

Patrick Michel argues that the intensity of the communist repression of the Catholic Church "was a ready-made way of identifying with the history of the nation, of affirming oneself as a Czech" but with the coming of an "ecumenism of struggle" against the tyranny after the intervention of Warsaw Pact troops in 1968, "a historic reconciliation appears to be coming about between the identity of the Czech nation and Catholicism" (1991: 7, 9). His analysis of the sketchy materials relating to the "underground Church" in Slovakia points to a shift from a compromising stance vis-à-vis the regime, typified by Cardinal Tomasek's initial condemnation of Charter 77, to his much stronger stance five years later with the evidence of forthright opposition by some priests and the emergence of the underground Church with strong support among the young (ibid: 40-41, 116-117, 122-130; O'Grady, 1995: 70-74).

In Hungary as in Czechoslovakia, the Catholic Church had to contend with national roots in Protestantism (Martin, 1978: 102-103) and "was weakened by association with pre-war right-wing regimes and its feudal character and property" (ibid: 106). Inevitably there was a long confrontation between the Communist regime and the Catholic Church which, in pre-war days, had possessed great wealth and power. Cardinal Mindszenty was imprisoned, Church appointments were manipulated, and Church people were continually harassed (ibid: 230). By the mid-eighties, the official Church was weak but there were "separate islands," base communities and groups, which eschewed "centralisation and clerical manipulation, preferring to remain flexible to meet varying social needs in different situations" (Tomka, 1988: 181).

Michel describes in detail the very different responses of the episcopacy in Hungary from those in Poland and also Czechoslovakia to the communist totalitarianism. The Hungarian episcopacy appeared to have fallen into the trap of "symbolic integration into the official system" and "despite Mindszenty, 1956 and long years of persecution...the Church...has reverted to a subservient role in which it appears as an official Church serving the interests of the government." A clandestine Church emerged in disagreement with the official Church and there were open attacks on the primate, Cardinal Lekai, by the faithful (1991: 23-27).

Earlier, Cardinal Mindszenty had articulated the strategy of intransigence towards the communist regime while in Poland, and Cardinal Wyszyński followed a wary path of realism, special compromises, and negotiation. When Cardinal Casaroli on behalf of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI instituted a new *Ostpolitik*, Mindszenty was unconvinced (ibid: 27-31). The process of normalisation of Church-State relations in Hungary, however, was not without its critics. Many grassroots Catholics regarded it as a "capitulation," "marked more by mediocrity than cowardice," there was the emergence of a critical basic communities movement of the Piarist priest Fr. Bulanyi, and the Hungarian Church was decidedly less cohesive than the Church in Czechoslovakia (ibid: 25; 36-38; 117-122). As O'Grady puts it: "Hungary, where the first successes of Vatican *Ostpolitik* were registered, came to be regarded as an example of its pitfalls" (1995: 70).

In a later analysis, Michel describes how the Hungarian bishops worked on the rehabilitation of the figure of Cardinal Mindszenty:

The solemn transfer of his remains to Eszergom, in May 1991, permitted the Church to pose as a victim of communism...the history of the relations between Church and state in Hungary had been continually reworked and during the seventies and eighties official history deliberately overlooked the role of Mindszenty. But now it is Cardinal Lekai, his successor at the head of the Hungarian Church and creator of the politics of "small steps", who is now forgotten. (1994: 38-39)

Michel concludes that although Church attendance in Hungary is low, the Church continues to exercise a disproportionate political influence. "In addition to the restitution of Church property, the Catholic lobby succeeded in obtaining the re-establishment of religious instruction in the schools, and continues to lead campaigns against pornography and abortion" (ibid: 41).

There seems to be little doubt that the accession of a charismatic Slavic Pope in October 1978 was "to shake the (communist) empire" in Central and Eastern Europe (O'Grady, 1995: 66). This was admitted by both Mikhail Gorbachov and General Jaruzelski. Timothy Garton Ash, the historian, has argued that the economic crisis in the Soviet empire was a "necessary, but by no means sufficient, cause of the revolution" (ibid: 7). In John Paul's inaugural homily he had challenged Catholics not to be afraid but to "open your doors to Christ...open State borders and political and economic systems" (ibid: 66). At Czestochowa on his second trip to Poland in 1983 he preached "call good and evil by name" (Bernstein and Politi, 1996: 379). This theme, resistance to "the web of mendacity" or "the culture of the lie" (Weigel, 1992: 41-47), was to strengthen and give hope to dissidents such as Vaclav Havel throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

The contribution of the Pope in supporting *Solidarnosc* and in demonstrating an alternative to the monolithic communist vision and the possibility of hope, especially as a consequence of his first visit to Poland in June 1979, is generally agreed (Michel, 1991: 131-170; Weigel, 1992: 15-35; O'Grady, 1995; Bernstein and Politi, 1996). George Weigel persuasively argues the inadequacy of the other explanations on offer: Gorbachev's

perestroika, Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, the ongoing Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe mandated by the Helsinki Act in 1975, or ideas about "delayed modernisation" or "the end of history". None of these explained not only *why* the revolution took place in 1989, but also *how* it occurred, its non-violent and democratic character.

Even so, O'Grady is surely right to warn against the "Jericho syndrome," the "John Paul did it all" thesis' (ibid: 8). Indeed, the Pope is reported to have admitted as much: "I didn't cause this to happen...The tree was already rotten. I just gave it a good shake and the rotten apples fell...It fell by itself because of its own inherent weakness" (Bernstein and Politi, 1996: 356; 482). Bernstein and Politi make out a convincing case that the end of "the Evil Empire" in Central and Eastern Europe was the common goal of both the American President Reagan (and his Catholic, ferociously anti-Communist aides) and the Polish Pope. Both believed that they had survived assassination attempts providentially and to this end they exchanged information and worked closely together (ibid: 237-361).

IV. Catholicism Since the Fall of Communism

That the image of the Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe which is held in the West is inconsistent, ambiguous, and partial has been pointed out by Patrick Michel who writes:

The inconsistency consists of juxtaposing two pictures that are mutually exclusive: that of the Church humiliated, arrests, persecution and silence, with that of the Church triumphant, omnipresent at the heart of the greatest social change to have swept across this part of Europe since the war. (1991: 71)

One attempt to address this is to be found in the *The Turned Card* (O'Grady, 1995). In this account a journalist who had traveled extensively in Central and Eastern Europe reports interviews with priests who had suffered long terms of imprisonment, numerous privations, and some brutality under communist regimes. These included the present Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Vlk, who had worked as a window cleaner and established

many small ecclesial communities, and the present Cardinal Korec, who, while working as a lift repairman in 1989, had been secretly ordained as a bishop at the age of twenty-seven and had organised the semi-clandestine Church throughout Slovakia and secretly wrote books as a “worker in overalls” (ibid, 1995: 50-56).

O’Grady also points out that some Catholics who had suffered for their faith under communist regimes were not at all happy with the Vatican appointment of “some pliable bishops acceptable to the regimes” (ibid: 57). Nevertheless the Holy See’s insertion of the right of liberty of conscience and religion into the Helsinki Agreement on European Security and Cooperation in the mid-1970s was regarded as an important factor in the “erosion of the Communist system” and a wedge which oppressed groups could utilize (ibid: 64-65).

In some respects we remain too close to the collapse of the Communist empire in Central and Eastern Europe to assess properly the extent of any secularising processes. In spite of the “symbolic capital” allotted to the Church as a “champion of democracy” during the Communist period, increasingly its power is being challenged, particularly by the young (Voyé and Dobbelaere, 1994: 103; Bernstein and Politi, 1996: 495). Ivan Varga distinguishes between the pseudo-secularisation of the totalitarian period of quasi-modernisation from secularisation as a putative outcome of modernisation, understood to include emphases on individual freedom and a pluralist system of ideas and politics. He points out that:

The post-unification history of East Germany shows a dramatic decrease in Church affiliation. In Poland...the efforts of the Church to clericalise the state and superimpose on society its often conservative, fundamentalist ideas and policies alienated many believers... In Hungary, there is a slow increase in Church-related religiosity²... East-Central European societies will eventually join the patterns of modernity and shed the ballast of pseudo-modernity... When this happens, they, too, will in all probability display the dynamics of secularisation as it developed over a lengthy historical period in Western Europe. (1995: 242; 244)

² See, e.g., Tomka, 1995: 18.

Similarly, another Hungarian sociologist suggests that in the prevailing thinking in Central and Eastern Europe there is:

A lag behind both the socio-cultural conditions of their own countries and behind the religious conditions of Europe and America. This means that the Churches try to give meaningful answers to the questions of the modern age and of the extremely diverse, sometimes chaotic society using a 50-year-old theology and relying on the popular piety based on unreflective religiosity and on the integration of the religious and cultural systems. This conception is also at a loss in knowing how to cope with religious pluralism. In the face of political differences and ideological pluralism or simply of the minority state of the Churches and Church-oriented religiosity, the Churches representing traditional ideas, aspiring to power, react with fear, reserve, theological inflexibility and refusal to accept the religious changes either of the past 50 years or those that have occurred in the West. (Tomka, 1995: 23-24)

Patrick Michel's important analysis of the relationships between politics and religion in the Soviet-type systems of Eastern Europe was published in France before the collapse of Communism. In the English edition of *Politics and Religion in Eastern Europe* (1991), he reflects on the implications of the collapse for the Catholic Church and concludes:

Moreover, it is by no means certain that the successes achieved by the Church in its long fight against totalitarianism are without their negative aspect. Communism has rendered the Church the signal service of sparing it the necessity of undertaking the difficult task of coming to terms with the modern world that has been thrust upon the Churches of the West. Now that pluralism has been firmly established and a "competitive market of values" opened in the East, there is a strong likelihood that this argument might surface again. This might well turn out to be a fresh challenge, and there is no assurance that it would prove easier for the Church to accept than the challenge it once faced from totalitarianism. (1991: 196)

Two points are of particular interest for our present purposes. First, the long struggle against totalitarianism has diverted attention from the need or problem of responding to the forces of modernisation. In order to resist totalitarianism, the Church, of necessity, imposed a certain degree of internal

discipline and conformity and in so doing, postponed the day of reckoning when the reforms of the Second Vatican Council were internalised and implemented. Among the most important was the replacement of a mechanistic hierarchical model of the Church with top-down authority structures with an organic, "People of God" model in which the differentiated talents and charismas of lay people were fully integrated in a pilgrim Church, not quite clear where it was going, but with all members collaborating in facing the obstacles met on the journey (Hornsby-Smith, 1989: 17). One might, therefore, anticipate that the Churches in Central and Eastern Europe would experience the same sort of internal conflicts which the Catholic Churches in the West have struggled with for the past three decades. When religion no longer needs a "fortress" Church, differences which had remained latent during periods of enforced conformity become manifest. This is likely not only in the areas of moral attitudes and practices, but also in the areas of religious beliefs and observances.

Second, there are likely to be tensions arising out of different interpretations of authority and, in particular, between older, pre-Vatican, autocratic styles and newer, post-Vatican, democratic styles (Hornsby-Smith, *ibid*: 121). Turowicz, former colleague of the Pope, admits that:

The Polish Church is highly polarised nowadays. Pre-conciliar attitudes confront post-conciliar behaviour... And I'm sorry to say that most of the clergy are rather fundamentalist and traditional, while the more liberal and open-minded ones are in the minority (Bernstein and Politi, 1996: 495).

It is even likely that some "progressive" clergy will impose change without consultation and explanation in a manner learned from earlier times.

³ Michel's important analysis of the difficulties which the Church in Poland is likely to face in post-Communist era is considered in greater detail in Hornsby-Smith (forthcoming). Michel quotes Cardinal Wyszyński in 1970 warning that "we have to prevent the Catholic Church from becoming 'Westernized'" and Cardinal Lekai saying in 1979 that he was suspicious of "all these novelties that reach us from the West" (Michel, 1991: 132; 71).

As Michel points out at some length, it is painful and very difficult for the clerical leadership to come to terms in practice with that pluralism, the legitimacy of which they had struggled so long to establish.³

A Jesuit, Father Stanislaw Musiał, in Kraków is reported to have observed that “maybe it was easier for the Church under Communism...at least things were considerably clearer: the line between Good and Evil was sharp. Now it’s more difficult for the Church which, moreover, runs the danger of seeming to block people’s maturity” (quoted in O’Grady, 1995: 117). Michel suggested that the future of the Church in Poland was uncertain and ranged “from the clericalisation of politics to the liquidation of religion’s social influence” (1994: 40). But the signs are not good since the Church appeared to be “offering solutions requiring normative conformity, even though the individualisation, relativisation and particularisation of the contemporary world produce rejection of such rigid norms” (1994: 42).

Michel’s predictions can be seen as a second type of secularisation thesis. In a new situation of pluralism, where there are competing “ideological structures” *within* the Church (Burns, 1996), the disciplined unity necessary for survival in a “fortress Church” situation is no longer sustainable. The religious transition is unlikely to occur without a struggle and there are likely to be conflicts between those wishing to *restore* an earlier privileged position for the Church in its relations with the state and the status of the clergy, on the one hand, and those wishing to *adapt* to dialogue in the completely new situation of political pluralism.⁴

V. Concluding Reflections

This chapter has attempted to show that the predictions of secularisation implicit in the theories of Wallis and Bruce, Martin, and Michel, seem largely to have been met in the case of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe since the collapse of communist totalitarianism.

⁴ A similar contrast, between “return or renewal,” is made by Varga (1995).

Following Martin's analysis, it seems that there is a time lag in the implementation of the reforms and spirit of the Second Vatican Council and a greater intransigence in orientations to the world strongly encouraged by a Polish Pope for reasons which are historically contingent. As early as 19 October, 1979, the veteran Vatican observer Peter Hebblethwaite noted that Pope John Paul II's papacy would be "collegially conservative, socially progressive and doctrinally restorationist" (1995: 23). In this, he was following the Polish primate, Cardinal Wyszynski who stressed that "conciliar renewal will come about not by a change in the institutions of the Church but in a renewal of minds, hearts and personal lifestyle" (quoted in Michel, 1991: 78).

It is useful to contrast pre-Vatican and post-Vatican styles of relating to the state. With the pre-Vatican style the orientation to the secular world is one of intransigence (Berger, 1973: 156) and relations with the state are characterised by mutual antagonism and hostility. In this situation the organisational response of the institutional Church is a pragmatic one depending on its ability to mobilise countervailing power (Burns, 1994). A post-Vatican style advocates a stance of accommodation with the secular world, seeing much that is good, as well as much that is of concern. It, therefore, aims to be discriminating in its relations with the state and to engage it in dialogue about social and moral issues rather than to defeat it by mobilising more powerful resources. It seems that in the years since the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the orientation of the Catholic Church in its relations with the state have been characterised more by intransigence than by accommodation.

It might be expected, therefore, that there will be a struggle between those, on the one hand, who favor the restoration of an earlier, pre-war privileged Church, with the imposition of elements of a Catholic religious culture by means of both legal and religious sanctions, and those, on the other hand, who favor the emergence of a dialogical relationship with the state over matters, such as religious education, which are of concern to the Church. Figure 1 presents some possible contrasts in the form of pre-Vatican restorationist and post-Vatican dialogical ideal-typical models of the Church. Recent events in Poland seem to suggest that a restorationist policy on the

part of the clerical leadership of the Church has been defeated, not least by the failure of the leadership, in its continued espousal of a pre-Vatican model of the Church, to carry the laity with it.

The defeat of Lech Walesa in the elections for the presidency in Poland and the election of former Communists seem to confirm the analysis. The attempt to impose (an approved Catholic candidate) by the use of (religious) power appears to have failed and the defeat of the clerical leadership represents a loss of their authority in the Weberian sense (Weber, 1964; 1968). Thus, the Warsaw correspondent of the London-based, Catholic weekly, *The Tablet* (Luxmoore, 1995) argued that "the Polish Church must share a large part of the blame" for the defeat of Lech Walesa. He highlighted the uncompromising, and at times, slanderous attacks on Kwasniewski's Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) by Church leaders, "authoritarian Church attitudes," the "stiff, heavy-handed attitudes of most Church leaders," the "sinister preoccupation with unidentified enemies," the Church's "uncompetitive public relations," and failure "to hold its own against the dynamic forces of a pluralistic society."

As Peter Hebblethwaite wrote in 1990: "The East European Christians have gone through their calvary; so far there are only hints of resurrection. They have become like the rest of us" (1995: 195).⁵ Such criticisms and conclusions are consistent with predictions arising from Michel's analysis.

It has also been shown in outline that predictions of changes in Roman Catholicism since the collapse of Communism have largely been borne out. It also seems that with the ending of the era of the "fortress Church" and its symbolic function of cultural defence, there has been a decline in the social significance of religion. Where previously "the Church had an identifiable opponent...now it had to handle the ambiguities of pluralism; what had been a redoubtable fortress (has) to become leaven" (O'Grady, 1995: 117).

⁵ The realisation of this during his fourth visit to Poland as Pope in 1991 angered and dismayed John Paul II, who always protested at the neglect of Central and Eastern Europe by Western Europe and who hoped those countries would offer a light from the East to counter the atheistic materialism in the West (Bernstein and Politi, 1996: 487-498).

There is no longer any need for, and it would in any case be impossible to maintain within the Church, a highly disciplined internal unity on the most appropriate relationships with the state. The consequence of a more pluralistic and democratic environment is the increasing visibility of the struggle within the Church between those wedded to a restorationist pre-Vatican model of the Church and its relations with society, and progressives who accept the more pluralistic situation in which they find themselves and, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, attempt a dialogue with the secular powers. O'Grady notes: "Persecution imposes stark choices. Rebuilding after it is a lengthy, complex process in which many issues appear fudged. And the intransigence needed to resist persecution is often unsuitable for the ambiguities of pluralist democracies" (1995: 131). It seems that internal conflicts may last for some time as the Churches in Central and Eastern Europe attempt to address the consequences of modernity as the Churches in Western societies have been doing for the past three decades.

Figure 1

Pre-Vatican Restorationist and Post-Vatican Dialogical Models of the Church

	Pre-Vatican Restorationist	Post-Vatican Dialogical
Orientation to the world (after Berger)	Intransigence	Accommodation
Relations with the state (e.g., Burns)	Privileged; (a) Attempted dominance e.g., concordats and/or (b) incorporation	Subordinate Pragmatic Loyal critic
Organisational response to social change	Restoration	Sensitive Dialogical
Authority style vis-à-vis politicians	(a) Superordinate (b) Obsequious	Collaborative
vis-à-vis laity	Autocratic	Enabling

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THE REVIVAL OF RELIGIOSITY IN BELARUS

In the spiritual life of the independent Belarus since 1991 an unusual “outlook pendulum” has appeared. Its essence consists both in the rapid growth of religiosity and the impetuous destruction of atheism. This movement swings to the antipodes of the processes which have been developing since the October Revolution and the breakdown of the Russian Empire in 1917, when the masses began to move away from religion. The scope of this movement is extremely large: in just the two last years (1992-1994) the number of religious unions in Belarus has increased from 1,340 to 1,855. That is a growth of 562 or by almost 1/3.

As before, their highest concentration may be seen in the western border areas with Poland: in the Brest region – 494 or 28% of the total number in the republic, in the Grodno region – 347 or 19.6% of the total. There are some differences in the denominational membership in these areas. In particular, according to the number of religious communities in the Brest region, the Orthodox Church takes first place (277), then Christian organisations of the Evangelical faith (77), and Evangelical Christian Baptists (68). Catholic communities are much fewer and score only fourth place (47). The denominational spectrum is quite different in the Grodno region. The prevalence of Catholicism shows in 149 communities, followed by Orthodoxy – 144 communities, Evangelical (19), and Baptists (15). One more difference between the Grodno and the Brest regions consists in the functioning of eight Islamic communities in the former, and only one in the latter. There are also two Lutheran communities

in the Grodno region, while in the Brest region there are no such communities.

If we take into consideration the scope and rate at which new religious communities are founded, first place in this process belongs to the Minsk region, where the number of religious communities from 1992 to 1994 has increased by 104, second to the Grodno region (which grew by 81 communities), and third to the Brest region (79 new communities). One should note that one of the phenomena of the peculiar religious "resurgence" in Belarus is the appearance of some new and quite exotic communities such as Krishna devotees (7 communities), Ba'hais (3 communities), Mormons (3 communities), and Zen Buddhists (1 community). A Shintoist religious organisation is trying to get official registration.

There is an intensive increase of the network of houses of worship due to the rapid growth of religious communities and to the extension of the scale of their activity. In addition to the already existing 730 Orthodox churches, 271 Catholic churches, and other houses of worship in Belarus, 153 new cult buildings are being constructed. In that number, 101 Orthodox, 38 Catholic, 14 Protestant, and 96 other cult buildings are in the process of reconstruction.

One should consider that, in addition to religious communities, there are a number of other denominational institutions which include Orthodox and Catholic theological seminaries, the Bible Institute, the Orthodox theological school for psalm readers, two monasteries, four convents, six Protestant missionary organisations, 30 religious centres, and national and regional centres and administrations. Among them are 10 Orthodox and 3 Catholic eparchy administrations. These religious institutions contain more than 2,100 pastors, more than 900 Orthodox priests, and more than 150 Polish Roman Catholic priests (104 of which are citizens of Poland). Besides that, more than 100 Polish Roman Catholic nuns come to Belarus by private invitation and perform their duties. A whole army of professionally trained men, organisations, and institutions contributes to the growth in religion, to the strengthening of its significance in the population's spiritual life.

The transformations of outlook due to the movement of large masses of people towards religiosity occur mainly in individual consciousnesses. Therefore, the influence of these trends on the identification of the person and social groups has a great significance. A monitoring study in the Gomel region enabled us to show that in November of 1989, 65% of the respondents considered themselves unbelievers, and five years later in September of 1994, there were only 35.2%; that is an almost 30% decrease. If in 1989, 22% of the respondents considered themselves to be believers, in 1994 there were 43.4%, twice as many. Moreover, the number of women who consider themselves believers considerably exceeds the number of men (54.6% compared to 33.3%). We should stress that in the elderly population groups, the rate of religious women is approximately 1.5 to 2 times more than amongst men. This divergence cannot be seen among the youth where adherence to religion is distributed equally between the sexes.

Given the almost twofold increase in religious adherents over the last five years, and the change in intensity and type of religiosity of individuals and groups, the question arises as to which factors effect this complex process of the spiritual reorientation of so many people. A thorough study of the dynamics of change in different social groups and people during the transition from totalitarian to post-socialist society (including ideology) and towards a democratic system, which gives priority in everything to the person and his development, enables us to answer this question.

The sociological surveys carried out by the Institute of Sociology in the Gomel region show that 23.9% of respondents join a religion in childhood (in normal situations, where the Church is not persecuted by the authorities, this number is 2 to 3 times more) and 21.2% come to God when they become an adult.

Most often the social environment which pushes the person to religion is the family. Its influence exceeds the effect of other individuals and groups on the inner world of the personality (See table 1).

Table 1

**Factors in the Social Environment Which Push a Person to Join a Religion
(1,541 persons were interviewed)**

Factors	Number of responses		%	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Family	534	911	34.5	58.7
Close friend	12	1207	7.9	78.1
Other people from the social environment	142	1213	9.2	78.3
Priest	201	1253	6.2	80.8
Spiritual mentor	147	1371	9.5	64.8
Unbeliever who did not exert such an influence	545		35.2	

The study shows that literature, including the Bible, is the main source of religious beliefs. The second most powerful influencing factor is a close person's death. The third is life failures. (See table 2) However, we should take into consideration that even people who get their religious knowledge from religious texts are usually in a social environment where the interpretation of these texts is carried out in the conceptual framework of secular culture.

Therefore, the religious identification of the majority of our contemporaries is more often the result of secular culture than religious culture. It is also a consequence of people's spontaneous spiritual searches and inspirations, looking for reliable support in a changing society undergoing a deep crisis. That is why the fact that in the Gomel region, which suffered the most from the Chernobyl accident, the small number of people who became religious — only 56 from 1,541 respondents — seems quite inexplicable.

Table 2

External Circumstances Which Push the Person Towards the Religion

Circumstances	Number of affirmative responses	%
Literature, books, the Bible	364	23.6
Illness	117	7.6
Death of a close person	345	22.4
Life failures	167	10.8
Chernobyl	56	3.6
Revelation	38	2.5
Afghanistan	21	1.4
Unbeliever, who did not affect this circumstances	545	35.4

Why do large masses of the population in this time of crisis find their place in this or that religion (or near it) in search of spiritual support? It would be simple to explain this tendency towards the growth of religiousness by a single reason. The resurgence in religious faith is caused by some correlated factors. The first of them has its roots in the social field, in the aggravation of the crisis which led to a sharp fall in the standards of life of the majority of people (in particular, two-thirds of the population in Belarus consider themselves to live at or below the poverty line), that caused the reduction of hope placed in earthly forces and the increase of hope placed in celestial and supernatural forces. For example, more than one third of the people (38%) from the Gomel region asserted that nobody but God took care of Man.

The second factor is caused by the destruction of the system of values which dominated in Soviet times and by the return of many people to lost pre-Soviet values, including religious ones. It is connected with a mass moving away from those social ideals and values which had been pressed upon millions of people in the vast area from Brest to Sakhalin for three quarters of a century. Under these conditions, many people in search

of social and moral guides resort to the authority of religion and religious organisations willingly, and actively propose their support in personal and social problems, having shared the integral outlook and the centuries' experience in spiritual support for the suffering people. It is typical that 44.7% of respondents are sure of the necessity of the resurgence in religious faith.

The third reason for the resurgence of religion consists in the political and legal changes in Belarus which abolished totalitarianism and obtained the independence due to the breakdown of the Soviet Union. This led to the elimination of the official and unofficial bans, persecution of priests and believers, and to the adoption of democratic legislation on the freedom of conscience and religion. In consequence, one may notice the growing activity of churches in religious, educational, cultural, and philanthropical fields. All these circumstances enabled the religious organisations to get over their dependent state and to strengthen the flow of large groups of people into church associations, and gave them the possibility to confess their religion openly and without fear.

An essential factor in the growth of religious faith everywhere is the more visible loss of spiritual values, the moral crisis which shakes our transitional society. The internal need of people who are not exposed to moral vices is to live in accordance with honesty, to benevolently help people with solutions to personal and social problems that strengthen their aspiration towards a religious outlook, and assimilation of religious, spiritual, and moral values. It should be stressed that 52.6% of respondents share the opinion that believers must be involved in the resurgence of Belorussian society.

An important social and psychological reason for the growth in religiosity in modern society is the resurgence in the national consciousness, the specific Belorussian mentality – its tolerance, endurance, peacefulness, and moderation in the evaluation of events. The religious identification of many of our contemporaries is not only close to, but interweaves with, ethnic and national identification. Probably, that is why 45.1% of respondents think that a resurgence in national consciousness is not possible without

Table 3

People's Opinion about the Ethnic and Social Differentiation of Catholics in the Border Region of Grodno.
What are the most Widespread Names for Catholics in your Area?

	In all	Poles	Belo-russians	krainians	Russians	Orthodox	Catholics	Unbelievers
Catholics	53,88	54,67	46,67	100	78,95	47,75	67,24	0
Simple local	8,74	12	8,57	0	0	9,01	5,17	
Belorussian Catholics	8,74	10,67	6,67	0	15,79	9,91	8,62	0
Belorussian Poles	16,99	14,67	20,95	0	5,26	18,92	17,24	0
Poles	45,63	40,0	52,38	33,33	31,58	50,45	36,21	100
Belarus-Catholics	7,28	8,0	8,57	0	0	8,11	8,62	
Poles of Belorussian origin	7,77	10,67	4,76	33,33	5,26	6,31	12,07	0
Citizens of Poland	1,94	2,67	0,95	0	0	4,5	5,17	0
Others	4,37	5,33	2,86	0	10,53	4,5	5,17	0

religious faith. Only 23.8% of respondents support any other point of view. People of other nationalities evaluate belief in a religious faith as a criterion of group-consciousness in their own way. Adherence to Catholicism is identified with belonging to the Polish nationality by more than 67% of Poles and 18% of Belorussians in the Grodno region, and the connection of Orthodoxy with the Belorussian nation, respectively, by 4.1% of Poles and 36% of Belorussians. This tendency is displayed in the names which are used in the border regions of Grodno with Poland (See table 3).

We should not underestimate the influence on outlook and value orientations of our contemporaries and, most of all, on the youth of the "fashion for the sacred," the ostentatious adherence to the religion, faith in the miracles, spirits, reincarnation, prophesies, and astrology. It is characteristic that amongst 1,541 respondents, 388 persons (25.1%) believe very much in horoscopes, although 28.7% do not believe in them at all, and the rest do not answer.

The complex correlation of the factors stated above in determining the sociodynamics of the spiritual sphere of the transitional society, which is making a disharmonious and difficult movement from totalitarianism towards democracy, creates a large determinant basis for religious resurgence.

The dependence of the rate of belief on age and sex should also be considered in order to understand the dynamics of religiosity. One may also notice the symmetry of the pendulum movement nowadays towards religion and lately towards atheism. In the past, the youth was the first to break with religion, while the elderly continued to support it persistently. The same situation may be shown now, when the young people are coming back to religion. In the 16-25 age group, the respondents' rate of belief is 34%, the 26-50 group is at 27%, and the more than 50 group is at 44.3%. The rate of belief in the youth group is somewhat lower than that of the elder age group but it is considerably higher than in the middle-age group.

There is one more peculiarity of religiosity which is connected with percentages of age and education. In the elderly age groups the rate of believers is higher amongst less-educated people. The number of people

with a secondary school or lower level education, particularly amongst people 65 or older, attains almost 80% while it is twice as low amongst those who have attended university. The opposite tendency is visible amongst young people in the Gomel region and in Minsk: in the age group up to 25 years, the number of respondents who had not completed secondary school and who are religious is 40%, but the number of respondents who had attended university rises to 59%.

One might say that one of the remarkable peculiarities of religious sociodynamics is a tendency towards growth among the "intellectuals." A special position in this respect belongs to culture workers, amongst whom 44% consider themselves believers and 46% assert that "religion takes an important place in their life." If amongst this occupational group, 34% attend public worship not less than once a month, amongst engineers this index is only 7% and only 16% consider themselves believers. Thus we may suppose (it is a preliminary suggestion that should be defined more precisely) that in the crisis development of society, where the horizons of religiosity are sharply extended, the culture workers develop a special "religious subculture" and this stratum probably disseminates religious faith.

One of the paradoxes of the sociodynamics of religiosity at present is the divergence between adherence to religion and the Church. Clergymen declare that people should come to church themselves having accomplished the feat of becoming believers, but many believers suppose that the Church should actively win them over (74%), but at the same time more than one third (36%) assert that they do not need any mediators to pray to God. Therefore, the declaration of adherence to a religious faith is not always stated with real religiosity.

Let us consider two aspects of this problem. As was said before, 43.4% of respondents in the eastern areas of Belarus (in the Gomel, Moguilev, and Minsk regions) and 45.2% in the Brest and Grodno regions that border with Poland declare their adherence to a religious faith. But religious rites, holidays, and traditions have a great significance only for 36.7% of them according to their statements, that is, by almost 10% less. There are fewer people who support their beliefs by religious rites. Of those who responded

29.2% from the Gomel region do not take part in religious rites, 29.1% participate in them one or two times a year, and 6.2% once a month. Thus, almost one third of the respondents do not ever participate in religious rites, more than half (55.7%) participate extremely seldom, not more than once a month, sometimes once a year. Only 15.7% of respondents take part in rites every week, 3.8% several times a week, 1.3% every day, and only 0.8% of all respondents several times a day.

The rate of involvement in religious actions depends in the highest degree on age. In the 15-18 age group, 15.6% take part in the rites; in the 19-24 group, 12.7%; and in the 25-30 group, 18.8%. The number of people who do not participate in the rites is twice that of those who observe them. In the 15-18 group there are 39.9%; in the 19-24 group, also 39.9%; and in the 25-30 group, 29.6%. Thus, in the groups up to 30 years old only a third part of the people who consider themselves to be believers participate in religious rites.

It is usually thought that the followers of Judaism are more zealous in their religious rites than the believers of other denominations. But our studies do not confirm this point of view. In particular, such specific Judaic rites as the ban on working on Saturday and "Kashrut" (the ban on eating pork) are supported by only 11% and 12% of the Belorussian Jews who declare their adherence to this religion. There is also a significant gap between the main characteristics of the Jewish group-consciousness and their observance of rites and rituals in everyday life. Consequently, it often has a declarative and ostentatious character and may oscillate to one or the other side, depending on the changes in the sociopolitical, economic, and sociocultural situation.

In this respect, declared adherence to the Jewish religion does not differ much from the gap existing between similar declarations from the representatives of the Christian denominations and real religiosity (the performance of rites, rituals, ceremonies).

The representatives of all denominations, including Judaism, and especially the young people, declaring their adherence to religious faith are ready to participate in the rites of church weddings and memorial services, that is, they are mostly oriented towards those rites which enable the estab-

lishment of trusting relations between people, rather than between individuals and the Church.

Not many people amongst those who declare their religiosity hold religious ideas. For example, 21% of respondents believe in Heaven, 23% in Hell, 35% in the life-to-come, but 59% respondents believe in supernatural forces.

Here we are approaching one aspect of the peculiarity of contemporary beliefs. The number of people who are inclined to declare faith such as it is (we conditionally call them "Christians in general") is growing faster than the number of adherents to certain denominations. These are people who do not "believe" in God, but in supernatural forces. Part of them identifies themselves with Orthodoxy, Catholicism, or some other Christian denomination, but mostly these are people with undetermined or eclectic outlooks, with interest in eastern teachings, in spirits, in contemporary para-scientific and para-religious mythologies constructed around parapsychology, astrology, Unidentified Flying Objects, etc. If we move away from the elderly age group (upwards of 60 years) to the youngest age group (16-17 years), the rate of believers in unspecified supernatural forces increases from 9 to 35%. This group is not only the youngest, but it is also the most educated. The rather rapid growth of these persons with unstable outlook orientations is probably the result of three simultaneously acting socio-psychological determinants. First, it is not purely a Belorussian, Russian etc. phenomenon, but an outcome of a world transformational process and the disintegration of traditional outlook systems. Second, this process is caused by the weakness, fragility, and shallowness of the ideologically structured Marxist-Leninist outlook which recently dominated in the disintegrated Soviet Union and, in particular, its atheistic aspect. Third, it is the result of the liberation of the self-awareness of many people who, under the Soviet government were dependent on the communist authorities and their ideology, including its atheistic ideas, and of a great aspiration towards western versions of culture. Especially since the development of technical civilization with traditional Christian values, the mystical ideas of spirits, witches, and vampires have gained a considerable significance.

The sociological empirical data enable us to reach the conclusion that the strengthening of "pro-religious," but not ecclesiastic values and aspirations outstrips the growth and dissemination of the religious faith. On the whole, the process of understanding the religion as an important element in the national culture, as one of the factors which form the national and ethnic self-consciousness, as bearer of great spiritual and moral potential, of general human values, is accompanied sometimes by the defects of this particular religious boom. Like any other boom, it is unstable and subject to serious oscillations that will surely find their reflection in the dynamics of religion in the future.

RELIGION IN POST-COMMUNIST BULGARIA

I. Cultural Historical Prologue

Although adherents of the theory of secularisation defend its universality (for example, the attitude of the state towards religion and the Church under totalitarianism is sometimes assumed to be a variation on the larger pattern of the state's rule and subordination which is also visible in the Scandinavian countries)¹, it is evident that its value as an explanatory theory for post-Communist countries is not very high.² One of the main differences is that the eschatological functions, the providential vision of the state, technically and scientifically guaranteed, have been taken over by a counter-religion, by a monopolistic ideology, while religion and Church are given only partial, marginal "errants"; that, though legal as a part of the individuals' everyday life, religion is being pushed away from it by all means which the state possesses.

The process of autonomisation and differentiation is revealed rather as a progressing opposition between the state and the social communities, the individuals. Consequently (in some of these countries) there is an identifi-

¹ Gustafsson, G.: *Politicization of State Churches – a Welfare State Model* in: "Social Compass", Vol. 37 No 1, 1990; Zylberberg J.: *La regulation etatique de la religion: monisme et pluralisme*, *ibid*, p. 89-92.

² Tomka, M.: *Secularization or Anomy? Interpreting Religion: Change in Communist Societies*, in: "Social Compass", Vol. 38, No. 1, 1991, p. 94.

cation of the Church with the latter, its self-confidence right before the change as a totality, opposing the state totality, the increase of the dogmatism and the traditionalism in its circles.³ This process of social (civil, individual) privatisation of religion developed rapidly under post-totalitarian conditions. The functional-pragmatic approach to the Church and religion, practiced in different social levels (from the “profane” problems of everyday life to the tragedy of a state deprived of ideological support) strives to put the sacred under total social control.

Two opposite trends were characteristic of the situation of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and religion under conditions established with the assistance of the Soviet Army on 9 September 1944, in “socialist” society in Bulgaria: a) there was a strengthening of Bulgaria’s inter-church situation as a result of the removal of the excommunication by the Patriarch of Constantinople (in 1945 at the suggestion of the Patriarch of Moscow, Alexei), and an active participation in international Church movements and forums; b) there was also an inner social and cultural marginalisation of the Church, and a strong decrease in its influence over mass consciousness, ideology, and politics. There was intensive secularisation after the Liberation which was characterised by a forceful dislodgement of the Church from its position as a big landowner, from its monopoly over civil rituals (marriages, funerals, baptisms); from the educational system, and from the traditional folk holiday system.

The Marxist communist ideology was imposed not only by force of arms and propaganda. It was supported by the intellectual circles and gradually took up the integrative and eschatological functions of Orthodoxy. It had its social base among the poor and suffering strata of Bulgarian society – the workers, the peasants and part of the intellectuals. Its science-like character corresponded to a large extent to the developed processes of industrialisation and modernisation. Sociological investigations on religiosity carried out in the 1960s and 1970s (with all reservations about

³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

the objectivity of the methods used and the authenticity of the results obtained) showed only 13% of the population of Bulgaria to be believers. These lived mainly in villages and small towns where industrialisation and secularisation were not dominant factors.⁴

Undoubtedly the state-party and “scientific” atheism, through the forced attack against Church institutions, liberties, and the consciousnesses of the believers, play an important role in the mass decline in traditional religiosity. But it seems to me that their importance should not be exaggerated because, on the one hand, they concern first of all the outer, ritual manifestation of religiousness, and on the other, they attack mainly the general and abstract characteristics of religion and not the complex syncretism of Christianity and Paganism, of religious ideas and superstitions, closely connected and fused with the community’s way of life, especially in the villages and small towns. The accelerated process of industrialisation, mass migration to the towns, and concentration of big working masses in the towns has created that which the atheism imposed from “above” could not: the age-old traditions, ways of life, and communities – the main reproductive milieu of the people’s religiosity are being destroyed. Not so the liquidation of private property and the “exploitation” and “undermining” of the social foundations of religion, as the destruction of the basic patriarchal communities, liberating a person from forms and laws of communication, from protection and authority of the group, in order to place him against the new and changing world, to require from him a new type of reactions and conduct, formation of new values and activities. At the same time, changes in the ideological and structural characteristics of this religiosity can easily be explained by the gradual disappearance of its natural milieu.

Secularisation has become real in the post-Communist era.

⁴ *Pravoslaviето v Bulgariya*, Sofia 1974 (*The Orthodoxy in Bulgaria*); Todorova, Nonka: *Transformatzii na utopizma*, CLSI, Sofia 1992, p. 14. (Transformations of the Utopianism).

II. Post-totalitarian Spirit and Religion

The transition from a totalitarian to a pluralistic system of economics, politics, and ideology which followed the Velvet Revolution at the end of 1989 created the possibility of, and the need to, explore the cultural space of the various political and philosophical doctrines, religious culture, and other ideological products which were suppressed under the dominance of Marxist ideology. This process had already begun, in cultural and intellectual circles, in the 1950s and had created its dissidents, although it was not as prominent as in other former socialist countries.

This new situation of political and ideological pluralism has had one further effect. It expresses, and in some sense creates, trends of differentiation and opposition between groups and strata in society, along with promoting individualism. This is expressed by the frequent change of governments, increasing criminality, and low authority of social institutions. A way out of this unfavorable social situation is being sought by politicians, philosophers, political scientists, etcetera, in different directions. One of them, although far from being popular, is the idea of Orthodoxy as a spiritual-ideological basis for unity and integration. This idea, which is traced by writers, poets, philosophers, Orthodox functionaries, etcetera, seeks to restore the emotional and ideological strength of the Orthodox idea as it was on the eve of the Liberation of Bulgaria from the Turkish yoke. It tries to identify Orthodoxy with the Bulgarian nation, and to offer a special spiritual alternative to the party-political fragmentation of the Bulgarian society. But at present it has not found broad support among political circles and has no social base in the wider cultural scene. Up to now, not a single party has connected its program explicitly with Orthodox spirituality. However, in the new democratic Constitution, effective since July 13, 1991, along with recognition of equality before the law of all citizens without "any restraints on their rights and privileges based on race, nationality, ethnic group, sex, origin, religion, education, personal or social status or property status, convictions, political affiliation" (Art. 6 paragraph 2), Orthodoxy is named as the traditional religion of Bulgaria.

The national and state ideologies have been drifting away from Orthodoxy for about 50 years. The yoking of these ideas has no strong cultural history in Bulgaria, in contrast to the historically intensive cultural synthesis of Orthodoxy, nation and state in Russia and Serbia. It determines, to a large extent, the lack of prospect for turning the Eastern Orthodox religion into a basic national ideology. This is increased by a historical tradition that the powerful institutional and cultural centers of Eastern Orthodoxy (Russia, Greece, Serbia) capture countries with weaker Orthodox and state traditions, such as Bulgaria, in their orbit as satellites.⁵ The process of nation-state formation in the Balkans in the last century has entailed the idea and historical practice of independent nation states undergoing a progressive process of complete secularisation. This opposed the idea and practice of the Orthodox communion coming from the political religion of Byzantium. This process has caused irreversible changes both in the intensity and the structure of the popular, everyday religiosity of the masses.

III. Contemporary Everyday Religiosity (The Bulgarian Case)

The main form of popular religion in pre-socialist agrarian Bulgaria was peasant religiosity. The concept "peasant religiosity" and its main characteristics have been widely investigated in a theoretical context. It involves strong pagan links with nature, a multitude of gods, a direct connection of faith in God, spirits, etcetera, holidays and rituals linked to the agricultural production cycle, prevalence of magic, etcetera, Industrialisation, mass migration to the towns, nationalisation of peasant property, and the introduction of mechanisation during the period of "socialism," largely destroyed the conditions and carriers of their form of religiosity. The introduction of democratic processes since 1989 has inherited a society with "islands" of religiosity concentrated mainly among the older generation in villages, but with insignificant numbers in towns. The younger generations, as a whole,

⁵ Thomas, E. A.: *Nation and Ideology*. L., 1981, pp. 100-180; Prilichevich, St.: *World Without End. The Saga of the South-Eastern Europe*, 1939, pp. 384-387.

Table 1

To what Extent are Religion and Church Personally Important to you?

	Not important at all %	Not important %	Rather important %	Rather important %	Important %	Very important %
TOTAL	31.0	16.9	16.0	14.0	9.7	12.4
SEX						
Female	27.0	16.3	16.7	14.5	11.9	13.6
Male	35.5	17.7	15.4	13.3	6.9	11.1
AGE						
18-24	27.5	23.2	22.2	11.2	10.4	5.4
25-34	38.2	15.2	19.7	11.7	6.7	8.4
35-54	29.6	18.7	19.6	10.6	9.4	12.1
55-+	30.1	14.2	8.9	18.6	11.4	16.9
EDUCATION						
Primary	31.1	14.2	11.8	18.7	9.7	14.4
Secondary	29.2	19.9	20.5	9.7	10.7	9.9
Higher	35.0	15.9	15.0	13.1	7.5	13.5
FAMILY STATUS						
Single	28.5	18.0	23.1	11.0	10.2	9.2
Married	32.2	17.5	15.5	13.5	9.8	11.4
Divorced	28.2	12.6	8.8	20.0	8.2	22.2
OCCUPATION						
Student	31.7	21.4	25.4	7.8	12.8	0.9
Worker/employee	32.5	16.7	16.8	12.3	8.5	13.2
Pensioner	27.3	13.5	12.1	19.7	11.9	13.4
Housewife/maternity	40.1	24.2	15.4	0	0	20.3
Other	30.3	28.1	19.1	9.0	7.8	5.7
RESIDENCE						
Village	32.5	14.7	15.2	18.6	7.0	12.0
Small town	29.4	20.8	16.8	7.2	9.9	16.0
Big city	30.2	21.7	16.6	11.9	11.7	7.9
Sofia	31.1	9.1	15.8	16.2	9.8	18.2

Sociological Agency "Noema", February 1993

Table 2

Religiosity in Bulgaria as per Datae of the Statistical Census of the Population in 1992

Total population number	Eastern Orthodox		Catholics		Protestants		Moslem Sunites		Moslem Shiites		Judaic		Armeno-gregorians		Dunnovites		Others		Showed no religion	
	Number	%	Num-ber	%	Num-ber	%	Num-ber	%	Num-ber	%	Num-ber	%	Num-ber	%	Num-ber	%	Num-ber	%	Num-ber	%
8487317	7274592	85.71	53074	0.63	21878	0.26	1026758	12.10	83573	0.98	2580	0.03	9672	0.11	315	0.00	6430	0.08	8481	0.10

Table 3

Do you Spend More or Less Time Today to go to the Church than five Years Ago?

	Number in sample	More time %	Less time	Same time	Cannot say %
Total	1025	18.5	24.0	28.9	28.6
SEX					
Female	525	21.5	20.8	31.2	26.5
Male	500	15.4	27.3	26.6	30.7
AGE					
18-24	100	27.0	24.6	25.6	22.7
25-34	146	15.0	30.8	30.8	23.4
35-54	369	13.5	30.4	26.6	29.5
55 +	408	22.2	15.6	31.0	31.2
EDUCATION					
Primary	424	17.9	20.9	22.6	38.6
Secondary	423	17.8	26.8	31.4	23.9
Higher	178	21.9	24.6	38.7	14.8
FAMILY STATUS					
Single	131	22.4	26.6	28.0	23.1
Married	697	15.8	25.6	29.0	29.7
Divorced	196	24.8	16.8	29.6	28.7
OCCUPATION					
Student	38	28.0	25.0	26.0	21.1
Worker/employee	468	18.0	27.7	31.7	22.7
Housewife/pensioner	414	20.5	17.8	28.4	33.3
Unemployed	105	9.2	31.7	20.5	38.7
NUMBER OF PERSONS PER NOUSEHOLD					
1	127	23.8	18.9	30.9	26.5
2	267	21.6	23.6	23.9	30.9
3	193	16.0	28.6	3.7	23.7
4	248	14.5	23.7	32.4	29.3
5 +	185	18.2	22.2	27.9	31.7
AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME PER PERSON (in levs)					
Up to 1000	326	12.3	21.2	27.3	39.3
1001-1500	346	18.8	23.5	30.7	27.0
1501-2000	176	25.8	28.6	28.1	17.5
2001-2500	74	20.9	32.1	31.0	16.0
Over 2500	87	22.2	23.0	31.5	23.2

RESIDENCE					
Village	348	12.2	24.2	17.1	46.4
Small town	235	23.7	26.6	27.5	22.2
Big city	318	22.3	23.1	32.4	22.2
Sofia	125	16.9	20.7	56.6	5.7

Noema, December 1993

were brought up in the spirit of rationalism and pragmatism of a science-oriented educational system.⁶ Note, however, this generation has begun to show an interest in astrology, Protestant "sects," and New Religious Movements. They also consider marriage and baptism to be legal rituals and there is a greater manifestation of Orthodox religiosity, especially at the major religious holidays (Easter, Christmas, some saints' days, etc.) and mainly as they relate to the family. Along with the freedom to visit a church, to profess one's religion, etcetera, democratic changes brought with them (as a consequence of changes in the economy) the, until then, unknown phenomena of change in social status, change of professions, qualifications, and the replacement of the old social symbols with new ones, along with the processes of stress, uncertainty, and instability of one's individual status. These processes have brought forth problems of mass mental adjustments and a search for spiritual, and even symbolic orientation, and stability in a rapidly changing social world. Some of these changes are connected with meeting these needs through religion. Although the socio-cultural situation in which the trends in contemporary religiosity are developing is in the process of fermentation and does not allow a coherent picture to emerge, table 1 gives an indication of what personal importance religion and the Church have for individuals in contemporary Bulgaria.⁷ For about 36% of

⁶ Kanev, K.: *La decomunisation et les droits de l'homme au seuil de la modernité*, in: "Bulgarian Quarterly", été, 1992; Todorova, N.: *Kopnezh po absolytitnoto S.*, 1994. (*Longing for the Absolute*); Stepanski J.: *Socialism and Atheism*, in: "Dialectics and Humanism", Vol. XIV, No 1, 1987.

⁷ Religiosity in Bulgaria as per statistical census of the population in 1992 is shown in Table 2. Compare Miter, P., *Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility in the Everyday Life of Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria*, Sofia 1994, p. 215.

Table 4

To what Extent is it Important to be Religious in Order to Make One's Life Successful Today

	Not im- portant at all %	Not im- portant %	Rather not im- portant %	Rather impor- tant %	Impor- tant %	Very impor- tant %
TOTAL	51.1	14.5	11.7	8.3	7.0	7.4
SEX						
Female	47.5	15.1	12.1	8.6	8.7	8.0
Male	55.4	13.9	11.2	8.2	4.6	6.7
AGE						
18-24	60.9	10.7	9.9	9.0	8.1	1.4
25-34	62.0	13.5	8.9	6.5	5.4	3.7
35-54	52.4	16.7	11.8	7.7	4.5	6.9
55 +	41.9	13.9	12.6	9.8	10.1	11.7
EDUCATION						
Primary	49.7	14.1	11.7	8.7	8.4	7.4
Secondary	51.9	14.2	12.9	7.4	6.6	7.0
Higher	52.5	16.0	8.6	9.8	4.6	8.5
FAMILY STATUS						
Single	55.1	15.5	16.3	7.4	6.0	4.7
Married	52.4	15.7	10.3	8.6	6.2	6.8
Divorced/widowed	41.3	11.3	13.0	6.8	12.8	14.8
OCCUPATION						
Student	63.7	9.6	16.3	4.2	2.3	3.9
Worker/employee	55.2	16.6	7.8	7.6	6.0	6.9
Pensioner	41.1	12.6	13.9	11.6	10.3	10.5
Housewife /maternity	31.8	26.1	14.1	7.7	12.0	8.3
Other	57.6	12.3	21.2	2.4	4.1	2.5
RESIDENCE						
Village	57.1	10.7	12.3	9.7	6.2	4.0
Small town	47.0	19.1	16.5	4.1	4.8	8.5
Big city	52.7	15.7	10.3	6.1	7.8	7.4
Sofia	42.0	14.9	8.3	14.0	8.4	12.4

Noema, February 1993

the respondents, religion and the Church are important. As table 1 shows, women and the elderly give greater importance to religion and the Church than men and representatives of the active age groups (about 40% for women as opposed to 31% for men and about 29% for the active groups). Incidentally, similar trends in the decreasing importance of traditional religion and the Church seem to apply for many Western European countries. Table 3 compares time spent on visiting the Church five years ago and today. It shows that 24% of the respondents spend less time now, 18% spend more, and 25% spend the same amount of time. A particularly strong imbalance is observed among the active age groups, where 30% of the respondents spend less time, and 15% more time now. For these groups, the search for an active, pragmatic way out of uncertainty and instability gets the upper hand over the quest for spiritual and ideological certainty. These results and figures could be interpreted additionally through an analysis of the responses about the connection between a person's prosperity in life and their religiosity today (table 4). The majority of the respondents (regardless of sex, age, education, etcetera) do not consider religiosity to be a necessary condition for success at present. Besides being a symptom of rational-pragmatic thinking and an adjustment to action, this break in the connection between success in life and religiosity is a sign of a civil, secularised consciousness. It reflects the change in the Constitution which states equality before the law of all citizens and no sanctions or privileges due to religious beliefs.

Research on the ethno-cultural situation in Bulgaria carried out by a team of sociologists, ethnographers, demographers, etcetera in 1994 gives additional details on characteristics of mass religiosity. According to the obtained results, less than 12% of the believers in Bulgaria (table 5) consider themselves "deeply devout," every fourth person does not go to church, and 21% of the deeply religious persons do not pray. The conclusions are:

The level of religiosity among the various ethnic groups differs widely: relatively speaking, most devout are ethnic Turks (RF = 0.727), followed by Bulgarian Muslims (RF = 0.706), and Gypsies (RF = 0.706). Bringing up the rear are the representatives of the major ethnic group, the Bulgarian Christians (RF = 0.520).

Table 5

Would you say, you are:	1992	1994
Deeply devout	11	12
Religious to a point	37	48
Rather unreligious	16	19
Utterly atheist	14	17
Neither religious, nor unreligious	22	—
Don't know, can't say	—	4

Most essential religious practices, such as prayer and visits to a house of worship (church, mosque) are irregularly attended by the two basic religious communities. Major religious festivals are the exception.

A new type of religious identification is observed: through Christian culture as a whole, which includes secularised forms of faith, varying in degree and concerning the secularisation of the faith and its intellectualisation. Eastern Orthodox identification takes on, for a portion of the Bulgarian population, the significance of a very general cultural legitimisation, a characteristic of affiliation with the Christian world and Bulgarian national tradition. This broad category includes utter atheists as well.

A generational trend towards enhancement of religiousness is not observed. Among all groups studied, the percentage of the deeply devout among the youngest (18-29 years) is lower, despite post-totalitarian religious fashions. Particularly significant is the declining religiousness among young Muslims, both ethnic-Turks and Bulgarian Muslims. And it is precisely among young people that we most frequently come across self-determination through Christian culture in general.

The ideological vacuum generated by the downfall of Communism provided unique chances to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The study established that, on the whole, these chances have either been missed or minimally utilised.⁸

⁸ Mitev Peter: *op cit*, p. 188.

In general, however, these results reflect a process of individualisation, of a more open and non-traditional attitude to religious rituals, dogmas, beliefs, etcetera.

Even without special sociological studies, it is evident that one of the most intensive forms of recognition of religion for many people is the celebration of holidays connected with Saints (name-days). Other forms of popular religion are: visiting holy places, wonder-working icons; requesting miracles; seeking protection against the difficulties and pains of everyday life, such as illness, poverty, children, family, etcetera. Perhaps, it is not accident that the interest in, and search for, help and cure through magic, fortune-telling, astrology, etcetera, is of a more intensive and mass character than interest in Orthodoxy. These last forms seem closer to the needs and problems of everyday life, and are connected directly to the social environment and the immediate future, in contrast to the individual and universal Orthodox eschatology which directs attention beyond the limits and conditions of everyday life. This understanding of time as actuality and availability, and the attitude towards the present life of an individual as the basic and determining one, is also one of the specific features of a secularised consciousness.

As everywhere in Europe, the type of religiosity characterised by an extensive knowledge of Church doctrines and their theological-philosophical meaning, conscious behaviour and attitude towards the world based on the requirements of the Christian morality, and observation of ritual practices, is part of the life style of a small group. But it is not the unique possession of clergymen or small part of cultured elite. Also, the partialisation of each of the above-mentioned characteristics, as the property of separate individuals or professions (philosophers, theologians) is a result of both the processes of intellectual specialisation and the restriction of social space to the religious ethos.

Which invariable features of everyday consciousness have been, and are, a potential reservoir for innovation and refreshment of religion? I think, the most important are: a) a desire to connect the alienated spiritual

phenomena with the eternal problems of human life — poverty, illness, death, injustice, and the value of human life; b) the anti-bureaucratic propensity, the preference for charismatic leaders and authority, with whom the link is of an emotional, often psychoanalytical nature; c) a longing to overcome the boundaries built by institutions, politicians, and ideologists between people and to unite them in a community, based on psycho-emotional grounds. Indeed, although Europe is divided by religious, dogmatic, and political controversies and rivalries, the mass, everyday religiosity both in Medieval times and today shares common, close peculiarities and tendencies. This mass everyday communitarianism, the welcoming of different peoples and cultures, is one of the chances for dialogue and mutual understanding. Its strength and freshness, I think, could recharge the institutional and intellectual spheres that have lost their authority with new vital energies.

Of course, everyday consciousness and its “consumption” of the sacred should not be idealised and fetishised. Without the cultural cultivation and refining of this consumption, our European culture would lose the sacred cultural phenomenon that has been inherited through the ages, which creates a powerful invisible, uninstitutionalised, but archetypically-determined spiritual unity.

IV. Youth Religiosity and New Religious Movements

I have marked off the problem of the influence of New Religious Movements in Bulgaria not because it is especially important or of a mass character (it concerns only a relatively small segment of society, mainly schoolchildren and students in five or six of the bigger towns), but due to the fact that it is a phenomenon widely discussed. The New Religious Movements are usually counted among the many negative phenomena of the changes, and in the eyes of public opinion they are one of the challenges and a menaces to Orthodoxy, which is now in a period of trial. After 1989, dozens of New Religious Movements (popularly called “sects”) came to

Table 6

To what Extent do the Following Statements Correspond to Your Attitude to Numerous Religious Sects and Movements Having Appeared in the Country Since 1989?

	TOTAL	MARITAL STATUS			TYPE OF SETTLEMENT			
		Single	Married	Wid- owed	Village	Small town	Big town	Sofia
Number in sample	1100	209	703	180	368	266	343	123
These religious sects and movements are part of any democratic society								
Completely	11.0	10.9	11.8	7.4	10.7	12.3	8.9	15.2
To some extent	16.7	18.3	17.2	12.7	12.7	18.6	18.3	19.9
Rather not	16.0	15.6	17.2	12.7	9.5	17.8	21.2	17.3
No	30.7	33.1	30.8	29.0	30.4	28.0	33.0	31.2
I have no opinion	25.6	22.0	23.0	38.3	36.8	23.2	18.6	16.4
Their dissemination should not be allowed in our society under any circumstances								
Completely	58.1	58.8	60.0	52.5	53.1	55.2	63.5	64.6
To some extent	10.2	11.5	10.2	8.5	7.2	10.2	12.3	12.7
Rather not	6.7	9.1	5.9	6.9	4.1	9.9	7.7	5.0
No	8.9	6.7	9.6	7.7	12.1	10.5	5.1	6.6
I have no opinion	16.1	13.8	14.3	24.4	23.5	14.2	11.5	11.2
I have personal antipathy to these religious movements and sects								
Completely	58.3	59.5	59.0	54.8	58.7	52.7	59.2	66.9
To some extent	9.5	14.6	8.2	8.8	6.9	10.8	12.2	6.7
Rather not	6.0	7.9	6.2	2.9	3.5	5.9	9.1	4.8
I have no opinion	20.4	15.0	19.2	30.1	25.4	21.1	15.2	18.6

Table 7

How does Participation in the Newly Appeared Sects and Movements, in your Opinion, Reflect Upon Their Members?

Influence over people who are members of sects and movements	Total	Yes, personally I am a member	I am not a member, but I have relatives and friends who are	I am not a member and I do not know relatives or friends who are
Number in Sample	1100	11	158	923
	%	%	%	%
Positive	0.4	10.9	.9	2
Rather positive	1.2	21.8	5.8	2
Rather negative	11.1	22.3	31.4	7.6
Negative	63.4	45.0	46.8	66.9
I cannot judge	24.0	0	15.2	25.2

Noema, July 1994

Bulgaria—Krishna devotees, Mormons, Scientologists, different varieties of Yoga, and many others. During re-registration in 1994, about 80 applications for non-traditional denominations were filed. In contrast to Orthodoxy, known for its political conservatism, its “monological character,” and its complex religious philosophical notion of the meaning of life, human predestination, salvation, “theosis,” etcetera, the New Religious Movements offer a modern verbal, musical, psychotherapeutical, existential dialogue. Inquiries conducted with members of these religious movements in Bulgaria show a motivation which appeals to the tastes and interests of the young: the need for love and protection; need for a charismatic and not hierarchal or traditional authority; integration into a community on an emotional-spiritual base; a feeling of one’s own value and significance; a feeling of being unique, the elect; reading the meaning of the existence through categories and doctrines which are close to life, art, and science.

The strong reaction against the New Religious Movements from the traditional institutions, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the media and parents exceeded (table 6) in its intensity the quantitative presence of the phenomenon in question (table 7). The sympathy for a new type of leader and solidarity, for knowledge of the world that is correlated to the being an individual, for actual significant signs of local-group electness — all this is a challenge to the traditional authorities which include parents, teachers, political leaders, hierarchies, families, education, institutions, nation, Church, and state.⁹ At the beginning of the democratic changes, the invasion of the New Religious Movements and their influence on Bulgarian society was mainly connected with the weakness and conservatism of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. But then, during a survey of public opinion conducted in October 1994 (announced on television on October 7, 1994) only 26% think that any counteraction should be led by the Church, while the rest

⁹ Stark, R.: *Europe’s Receptivity to New Religious Movements. Round Two*, in: “Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion”, 1993, Vol. 32, No. 4.

believe that decisions and counteractions should be realised by society as a whole.

As a conclusion to this brief analysis, I would like to say that as in many other countries in the West and East, in Bulgaria the above-mentioned phenomenon is to a great extent a symptom and consequence of the crisis in the social structure of the traditional and hierarchical forms of authority and organisation of society and the traditional religions in particular, as well as of exhausted mythologies and ideologies. Although any speculative prognostications in such cases would not be reliable, I would like to express an expectation that the family, traditionally the strongest and most stable institution in Bulgaria, will probably be, to a large extent, the successful carrier of resisting energies and strategies, and will be the eventual "winner" in the competition with new models.

V. The "Invasion" of the Russian Orthodox-Religious Ideas in Bulgaria Today

There is now an opening for western political and economic models, doctrines, and values in Bulgaria. Dozens of publishing houses promote well-known names in philosophy, religion, literature, and poetry. Also, after several years of criticism and denial by the imperial influence of the Soviet Union on Bulgaria, today books by many Russian philosophers of religion (N. Berdyaev, V. Solovjev, M. Posnov, M. Bulgakov, S. Frank, etc.) are widely translated and read. Having created a special connection between dogmatic Orthodoxy and the philosophical, literary, and cultural consciousness of their time (the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries), and having proposed original versions of religious existentialism, along with a philosophy of man and history in a new eschatological perspective, these ideas today complement the palette of the "imported" colours in the Bulgarian cultural consciousness. They project the exotic character of Eastern mysticism along with an anti-institutional longing for spiritual community with a personal, unique, and directly individual attitude to-

wards God and a feeling of the electness and supremacy of the Orthodox world.¹⁰

They are a supplement, and in some ways a counterpoint, to the Western rationalistic and pragmatic world view with its respect for institutions and social hierarchy. They also ally themselves with the total invasion of materialism and money into interpersonal communication and self-consciousness about the supremacy of Western social models and doctrines present in European and American literature. Their strong world view and ideological charge conceal various possibilities for development in combination with different sociopolitical ideas and practical behaviour. The elements of mysticism and self-concentration in the process of reaching God, asceticism, and submission, and the respect for the human spirit and soul are somehow in conflict with any one nation's select status as the Third Rome, and they represent the supremacy of charismatic authority over institutional structures and hierarchy.

The latter line of thought, as it has been known for centuries (of course, in other forms and by other authors), has been the basis of the imperial political model in some Orthodox countries, and particularly in Russia.¹¹ This idea and tendency could hardly have a strong influence and organised social-political presence in Bulgaria. This line in the Orthodox religious philosophy would rather have the special function of creating a prestige group-consciousness and identification of elite intellectual and cultural circles and would give grounds for definite norms of individual and elite-group ethos: keeping a distance from the political dilemmas and temptations of money, career, and integration in the prestige institutions; and creating closed circles for discussions, ritual practices, etcetera.

¹⁰ Losev, A. V.: *Solovjov i ego vremya*. Moskow, 1990 (V. Solovjov and His Time); Suhov A. *Russkaya filosofiya*. Moskow 1989 (*The Russian Philosophy — in Russian*), p. 139-154.

¹¹ Berdyaev, N.: *Novoye Srednevekovie (The New Middle Age)*, Moskow, 1992, p. 22, 50, 81.

We may say that in this way the values of Orthodoxy, its spirit, world outlook, and moral and behavioural norms, along with the national ideal come to Bulgarian cultural consciousness, but not in broad circles. It should also be pointed out that in some of the articles mentioned above, the Orthodox Church comes in for criticism due to its dogmatic spirit, formal ritual practices, bureaucratic hierarchy, pro-state conformism, etcetera. (Berdyayev, Solovjev, etc.)

Bulgarian cultural identity is at a crossroad again.

VI. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church in the Period of Democratic Changes

As it becomes clear from the situation briefly described above, dynamic processes are taking place in Bulgarian religious consciousness. Is the Bulgarian Orthodox Church able now to meet the expectations, challenges and trials of these changes and processes? Could it fill the world view vacuum that has appeared after a collapse of Marxist ideology? At first sight it looks as if the actual freedom of religious convictions and rituals achieved after 10 November 1989 has reflected favorably upon the authority and social importance of the Church. The number of Church weddings and baptisms has increased, the churches are full of people during major religious holidays, and almost all official events are accompanied by a consecration ceremony. The mass media (television, in particular) pay much more attention to religion and Church affairs today. The Theological Faculty has been re-established, two major publications — “Church Newspaper” and “Spiritual Culture” — are published regularly; attempts have been made to introduce religion as a subject in the educational system; the number of young people willing to study theology has increased several times over, and for the first time in 50 years, the construction of several churches has begun; part of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church property and the property of independent monasteries has been returned.

But at the same time a spirit of distrust and disappointment in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church prevails in the society. One of the reasons lies

Table 8

Do you have Confidence in the Church?

	Number in sample	Confidence in the Church (%)			
		Yes, complete	Yes, to some extent	Rather not	No
Total	861	22.5	26.6	20.0	30.9
SEX					
Female	461	25.3	26.4	19.8	28.5
Male	393	19.5	26.6	20.6	33.3
AGE					
18-24	90	16.5	33.3	18.8	31.3
25-34	145	15.8	28.3	21.7	34.2
35-54	310	23.7	24.1	18.9	33.3
55 +	313	26.6	25.7	20.9	26.7
EDUCATION					
Primary	361	30.5	24.6	17.3	27.6
Secondary	357	16.5	30.2	20.7	32.6
Higher	144	18.0	22.5	25.0	34.5
FAMILY STATUS					
Single	121	23.6	26.8	14.4	35.2
Married	631	21.8	26.2	21.7	30.3
Divorced	98	26.8	26.7	16.1	30.5
OCCUPATION					
Student	52	20.0	26.0	26.9	27.2
Worker/employee	421	22.3	25.9	18.8	33.0
Pensioner	290	24.5	26.8	19.9	28.8
Housewife/maternity	10	12.0	27.5	33.6	26.9
	77	21.4	30.6	19.6	28.5
RESIDENCE					
Village	274	24.4	24.2	23.6	27.7
Small town	137	34.5	25.6	13.8	26.2
Big city	285	19.4	27.1	20.9	32.6
Sofia	159	14.9	30.2	17.6	37.2

Noema, Ferbruary 1993

in its conservatism, lack of competitiveness as regards the new modern religious denominations. (In the beginning, public opinion blamed the weakness of the Church for the influence of the New Religious Movements, while, at present, a wider and more complex understanding of this phenomenon is current). Fidelity to the canons, traditions and dogmas, the low standards of the clergy, insusceptibility to more efficient forms of influence over the new, modern consciousness — all these traditional features of Eastern Orthodoxy which form its inner continuity and coherence,¹² take it away from the cultural, spiritual fermentation of the public consciousness nowadays (by the way, this process concerns all the traditional forms of Christianity at present).

One more peculiarity of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in the period of changes may be added. This is the inner schism which has divided the bishops of the Church into two alternative Synods at odds with one another, unable to overcome the crisis of legitimacy since 1992. The Bulgarian patriarch, Maxim, has been at the head of the Holy Synod since before the revolutionary events of 1989; the Alternative Synod, pretending not to be burdened with the errors of the past or with collaboration with the Communist party, is headed by Archbishop Pimen. Neither the efforts inside the Church, nor the efforts of the state and public have given a final result. The prevailing opinion is that only the Church People Council is legally correct (in accordance with Art. 8 and 29 of the Statutes of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church). This has largely reduced the authority and confidence in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and has not allowed it to show itself as a legitimate subject and partner of the state, as a carrier of unifying national values. A sociological survey (table 8) carried out in February 1993 shows complete confidence in the Church at less than 22% and complete distrust at 31%. In December of the same year (table 9), the figures are respectively 22% against 36%. In an only seven-month period, the number of those

¹² Kokosalakis, Nikos: *The Historical Continuity and Cultural Specificity of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, in: "Philosophical Alternatives", Sofia, 1993, No. 6, p. 116.

Table 9
Do you have Confidence in the Church?

	Number in sample	Confidence in the Church (%)			
		Yes, complete	Yes, to some extent	Rather not	No
Base	1025	20.8	26.2	16.8	36.3
SEX					
Female	525	24.3	30.1	14.0	31.6
Male	500	17.0	22.1	19.7	41.2
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NUMBER OF PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD					
1	127	36.3	27.3	12.1	24.3
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AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME per PERSON (in levs)					
Up to 1000	326	22.4	22.3	15.1	40.2
1001-1500	346	22.6	25.8	14.2	37.4
1501-2000	176	15.8	31.2	21.5	31.5
2001-2500	74	18.1	29.2	18.1	34.6
Over 2501	87	23.0	25.7	19.7	31.6
RESIDENCE					
Village	348	24.2	19.3	14.4	42.1
Small town	235	25.2	30.3	14.7	29.9
Big city	318	15.4	26.4	20.7	37.5
Sofia	125	16.5	37.2	17.4	28.9

Noema, December 1993

having no confidence has increased by 5%. This situation makes the international situation and authority of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church unstable and prestigeless — this fact reflecting poorly upon the whole nation and state.

VII. Conclusion

Although in a much generalised form, the picture of the religiosity in Bulgaria during the five-year period of democratic changes makes the impression of a dynamic character of the processes and dynamic spiritual fermentation of the values, ideas, outlook, and mental adjustments close in many parameters to those in the Western post-modern consciousness.¹² In this sense, without neglecting the cultural specificity of this process in Bulgaria and in the Orthodox countries, in general, it could be stated that both at the level of mass consciousness and among the intellectual cultural circles there exists a basis for communication, for mutual understanding, for dialogue.

¹² *European Identity and Religious Diversities in the Contemporary Changes. Proceedings of the 1st International Summer School on Religions in Europe*, Firenze 1995, (the papers of G. Connolly, K. Dobbelaere, A. Nesti, L. Voye, etc.)

RELIGION IN CZECH REPUBLIC OF THE 1990s IN VIEW OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

People in today's Czech society, which is just forming its political, economical, social, and moral concepts, find resources in books, thoughts, and theories as well as in churches. For part of the population the churches represent the source and guarantee of moral and spiritual development. The church had already obtained this position before 1989.

The history and the development of the churches' situation before the Velvet Revolution are sketched in the following short analysis.

I. The Position of the Churches and the Understanding of Religious Freedom Before November 1989

Attitudes towards religion were roughly monitored even before 1989. Research from that time shows that the great majority (88%) of religiously-oriented people had good conditions for satisfying their religious needs. The rest of them (12%) missed the possibility of official associations, organising public religious events, and attending church without risk of punishment. Others wanted more religious literature and press, better information about church life, higher tolerance for believers in the workplace, especially in choosing leadership positions. Another 13% had problems with regards to secondary schools and university entrance examinations or at work. They suffered from gossip in interviews, and they were discriminated against in career promotions.

The prevailing public opinion was that religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution were only slightly, or in part, respected by state and social organisations (57%). Full respect for religious freedom was assumed by only 15% of citizens. About one-fifth of the population couldn't express their views. In October 1989, about 40% of those interviewed considered the Catholic Church to be an important fighter for human rights, more than one third disagreed, and one fifth could not judge this. Eighteen percent of interviewed people ligions events such as funerals and role in the life of society than now, 45% answered that they should have the same role they now have. One-fourth thought that such events were not well-founded in society. In October 1989, the population of what was then Czechoslovakia was prepared for the Pope's visit. Two-thirds would have agreed with his visit. The answer to the question of whether the churches should be given more space for spreading their religious doctrines in the mass media was positive in 42% of cases. Most (65%) felt that the churches should take care of the spiritual lives of their believers. Twenty-four percent of those interviewed answered that the churches should also be involved in solving of social problems.

Not only the research data, but also the public response to real actions organised by the churches, especially by the largest, the Catholic Church, indicated support by a significant portion of the population. Before November 1989, this Church obtained public support thanks to a considerable number of organised events. Above all, there were more than 600,000 thousand signatures on the Moravian Catholic's Petition which asked for more religious freedoms. The Decade of Spiritual Restoration proclaimed by Cardinal Tomášek in 1987 received a good public response. The attendance of 100,000 at the march on Velehrad, Moravia, and, above all, the canonization of St. Agnes the Czech, were manifestations of dissatisfaction with the approach and realisation of freedoms in what was then Czechoslovakia. The peak expression was the attention paid to the priest, Václav Malý, in November 1989 and after.

II. What Influences the Position of the Churches Today?

The role of the churches and their real place in society are determined, not only by recent and older history in our country, but also by wider European conditions. The prominent Czech theologian Tomáš Halík has characterised the attitude towards the church in the Czech Republic in the following way: "In our awareness, apart from other filth, there are forty years of the hateful anti-religious campaign, the anti-Catholic orientation of the First Republic and the anti-clericalism of fossil liberalism in the past century. There are also bad experiences with the Catholic Church further back in history, properly stressed by Czech historians, and there is also the fact of the church's absence for two generations and poor (and above all, often contradictory) experience with its life in freedom." (Halík 1993).

Six years later we are now able to evaluate how the Church itself has taken advantage of the chance to operate in a free society. The former President of the Christian-Democratic Party, currently Vice-president of ODS and Minister of Education, Ivan Pilip, said on this topic: "The Catholic Church did not take full advantage of the chance which it was offered in 1989, when it had comparatively high, uncommonly so in this secularized land, confidence. Unfortunately, it began to be connected with restitution more than with anything else." (Pilip 1996).

Attitudes towards the churches are influenced by societal conditions in traditional democracies as well as in other countries in the world. The social conditions in various parts of the world have led to a greater importance of freedom and human solidarity than in the past. The chairman of the European Episcopal Conference, Miloslav Vlk, said: "Communist Europe misapplies solidarity and suppresses freedom, at the same time, Western Europe misapplies freedom and partially refuses solidarity... In such conditions, freedom, which we understandably wish, is in danger of distortion. In the old European democracies, there is not the lack of freedom but a low ability to enjoy this freedom." (Vlk 1993)

Representatives of other different, sometimes marginal, bodies of thought also do not simplify the view of the role of the churches' role.

Their representatives proclaim a return to a real, undistorted God and to a life in truth. For example, J.D. Dvorský says: "How could the Pope not mind that the people kneel down to him, kiss his hands, legs, vestment...? He should feel embarrassed. He is imitating God... the Pope is serving the Dark and the Catholic masses do so as well. They seem to be still powerful, but they are ill. Fatally ill. The eschaton is coming. The truth will sound out like a trumpet and you will see how many temples, made from cards, will tumble down, now and for ever." (Dvorský 1993). The Jehovah's Witnesses present their ideas in a similar way. (*What is the sense of life* 1994).

The result of various influences is that 12% of those interviewed are highly interested in Christianity, 30% are partly interested, and 11% are interested in the activities of sects.

The population have the possibility to learn about other ideas and knowledge connected with spiritual life. The book, *Life after Life* by Moody, which describes feelings and experiences on the boundary between life and death and going back to "past lives," obtained great publicity. Psychology also extends views on spiritual life. The American psychologist of Czech origin, Grof, has defined various types of consciousness. He has defined their psychological basis and various transpersonal elements in individual consciousness (Grof 1992). Psychology is so popular thanks to the need to find one's way in relations between people. Furthermore, the media have made the public familiar with this branch of science. Publications promoting successful business, management, behavior, and interpersonal communication have become widespread.

Some other methods, for example courses in confidence and self-control such as the Silva method, also promote the manipulation of the psyche with certain psychological training. These courses, together with such courses as "The Gold Mind" and "The Blue Alpha," (attendees of which learn to program their minds for the Alpha level, as well as an untraditional application of psychology) have addressed part of the population. This trend has dealt especially with techniques which help man to be successful, to survive in strong competition, and to strengthen his health. Several tens of thousands of people have taken part in such courses in the last couple of years.

Twelve percent of Czech people are highly interested in psychology, 35% are partly interested, and another 5% are interested in the New Age movement. All these ideas, feelings, thoughts, and imagination form, more or less, the attitude of people towards life, nature, society, and also towards the churches. The introductory quotation from the Catholic theologian indicated that the inhabitants of the Czech Republic and residents in Czech regions are more likely to have had a non-religious orientation for a longer time period.

What were the results of the National Census taken in 1991? Of the population, 39.2% declared themselves to be members of the Roman Catholic Church, 1.9% were members of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, 1.7% of the Czech Hussite Church, 1.3% of other churches, 39.7% had no religion, and in 16.2% of cases religion was not specified (Census 1991). Special holidays, for example the biggest Christian holiday, Christmas, bring a special solemn atmosphere to nearly the whole of society and often represent a time associated with self-reflection and meditation. This is not usually connected with any church or religion.

People of various world views usually create their own attitudes towards religion, to faith, and to the churches, based on their own life experiences and on historical and national tradition. An aspect of religion which cannot be omitted remains in basic cognition. The content of religion and faith is not, and cannot be, the subject of any sociological research. Schelsky says that the sociology of religion alone cannot answer such questions as the faith of modern man. Religious life understood as the "inward nature of faith" is not, and cannot be, the subject of sociology. (Schelsky 1969)

III. The Opinion of the Public on the Position of Churches and Their Activities in 1990-1995

The first visit of the Pope in 1990 was one of the most important internal political events in Czechoslovakia at that time. The Czech people judged some facts connected with this visit in March and April of 1990, and five years later, in May 1995. The Pope's stay and associated actions

received a lot of publicity and the event was followed by more than 75% of the people in both cases.

The attendance of the public at meetings with the Pope was monitored during both visits. The answers are in table 1.

Table 1
Attitudes Towards the Pope's Visit (in %)

Number of people	1990	1995
Attended welcoming	5	2
Some divine services	5	5
Both	2	1
Did not attend	88	92

Comparing the year 1990 and the year 1995, the attendance was lower in 1995.

The evaluation of the importance of the visit was also taken down twice. The data on the first and second visit are in the table 2.

Table 2
Importance of the Pope's Visit for the Czech Republic (in %)

	1990	1995
Great importance	67	27
Small importance	11	21
No importance	3	17
Not interested	11	21
Cannot answer	8	14

Compared with the first visit of the Pope, the amount of people who considered it important declined by thirty percent.

Those who considered the visit important (of great and small importance) were asked why the visit had been important. For 10% it was a great experience, for 7% spiritual support, for 6% a great holiday, for 6% a private

experience, 8% connected the visit with the world's interest in the Czech Republic, 4% stressed its importance for the church, 3% understood it as a social event, 2% disagreed with the visit, and in 4% there were other answers, such as: a meeting of the people and an expression of freedom. The visit brought nothing personal to 46% of the respondents and 2% did not answer.

The share of people who answered that the visit did not bring anything to them personally grew by 24 percentage points.

In 1991, the public also expressed their views on the significance of the church and religion for life in the Czech Republic. Seventy percent thought that religious ideas are positive or more likely positive, for 10% religious ideas were negative, and 20% of those interviewed did not answer.

For a more detailed specification of the role of the churches, one-third of the population stated that the task of church was to lead to goodness, one-fourth thought that the church should lead to faith, and one-tenth connected its role with help for the believers and moral upbringing. About one-tenth chose to recall the demagogic behaviour of the church and its greed for possession. One-fifth did not comment on this topic. Generally, a more significant understanding of the role of churches in a general humanistic context follows from the answers.

The question to what extent the churches should be oriented only to the care of spiritual life of their believers or should they also influence the solving of political and the social problems, was asked in July 1993 and 1995. The results of both inquiries are in table 3.

Table 3
The View on the Role of the Churches in Society (%)

	July 1993	July 1995
Should care for the spiritual life of people	59	63
Should have a chance to influence the solving of political and social problems	21	18
Don't know	12	12
Not interested	8	7

The view that churches should care only for the spiritual life was slightly stronger in 1995 and this was close to the views from 1989. The view that churches should influence political and social problems was seen a little bit less frequent in 1995.

Public evaluation of the need for the churches' activities in July 1993, and in following years are shown in table 4.

Table 4
The Existence of the Church is very Useful or Useful for: (%)

	July 1993	July 1995	March 1996
Care of old and ill people	78	74	65
Spiritual support of people	70	71	61
Care of poor people	67	63	55
Proper moral life in society	60	54	47
Proper education of children	47	42	38

(Calculation up to 100% are answers like "they are not very useful," "not useful," and "don't know.")

While the decline in the view that the Church is useful was small between July 1993 and July 1995 (only by 4-10 percent points), the decline in the following 8 months was by 9-13%. The most significant is the decline in "care of old and ill people" and in "the moral life of the society."

Opinions on what significance religion has in society now were explored several times. The results are in table 5.

Table 5
The View on the Role of Religion in Society (%)

The importance	1993	1995	1996
Decreases	3	23	27
Is the same as it was	19	29	31
Increases	72	31	26
Don't know	6	17	16

In 1996, the highest number of respondents replied that the importance of religion was the same as before. The share of answers declaring that the importance of religion decreases slightly increased and the share of answers that the importance is higher declined. The public felt in their subconscious that the Church did not express its opinion on social justice in the spirit of the Pope's encyclicals. The publicists, who dealt with these topics and compared the position of the Church in the Czech Republic with other countries, had to agree with this fact. (Hekrdla 1996).

IV. The Views on Returning Property to the Churches and on Financing their Activities

Discussion on returning nationalised Church property had taken place in the former Federal Parliament since the Spring of 1991. In July 1991, the public had the opportunity to express their views on this matter.

Table 6
Citizens' Opinions what the Churches Should Retrieve (%)

	All	Some	No	Don't know
Rectories, temples, seminaries	55	37	5	3
Large houses and real estate such as senior homes, spa buildings, schools	21	43	30	6
Parks and gardens	25	36	34	5
Chateaux and cultural monuments	15	37	43	5
Forest	18	24	51	7
Agricultural land, vineyards	15	27	51	7
Building areas	13	26	50	11
Industrial estates - breweries, mills etc.	12	21	59	8

The prevailing answers to the first four types of property were "return it all" or "return the majority." This property is used especially for cultural, educational, and social purposes. Only a small part of the population felt that other property, used for entrepreneurial activities, should be returned.

The population also expressed their views on the reasons why churches call for the return of their property.

Table 7

Evaluation of the Reasons for Returning All the Property to the Churches (%)

The reason why the churches and religious orders want the return of all their property	Definitely Yes	Rather Yes	Rather No	Definitely No
To maintain religious monuments	23	54	14	4
To be independent of politics	18	38	16	12
To have enough money mainly for themselves	29	24	16	21
To have enough money to help people in need	15	41	23	10
For achieving justice	13	30	30	13
To have money for believing people	4	19	41	25

(Calculation up to the 100% are answers "don't know.")

The respondents connected the use of returned property mainly with the maintenance of religious monuments. The call for the return of the property was to some extent understood as a call for independence from politics, for financial security, and financial means for help for people in need. The views that the Church wants to reach justice this way, and opposite views were in balance.

Another question tested views on the further return of property to the churches. A comparison of the results of two inquiries follow in table 6.

Table 8

Views on Returning Property to Churches (%)

	1993	1996
Return property from the First Republic	5	7
Return property from February 1948	16	17
Return only part of it	27	21
Don't return anything more	43	36
Don't know	9	19

The share of answers for "return" (the first plus the second answer) has grown imperceptibly. Some "don't return" answers transferred to "don't know." This indicates that the public is becoming tired and indifferent towards such questions.

Views on returning property to churches also corresponds with this fact. In the preceding inquires, only 9% preferred the churches, 47% propose to take into account both sides, i.e., both the churches' interests and the needs of society, and 35% would definitely prefer the needs of society. Public opinion was not controversial, divided between equal rights for both subjects and a dominance of support for societal needs.

Views on how to finance the Church, where the Church should get the financial means for its activities, were also monitored in February 1993. One-fourth stressed the church's own entrepreneurial activity, 53% supposed that the main financial sources should be the contributions of believers, presents and gifts from foundations, only 7% would give it funding from the state budget.

V. The Faith in God and Attitudes Towards Religious Activities

Faith in God represents one of the basic symbols of religious and non-religious orientation. The question whether the interviewed person believes in God has its own tradition in public opinion research in the Czech Republic. This question appeared for the first time in 1946. At that time, 64% believed in God, 24% admitted the possibility of His existence, and 12% did not believe.

The changes since 1989 are in the table 9.

Table 9
Standpoints on Faith in God in Czech Republic Since 1989 (%)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Believe in God	16	22	25	24	20	24	21	20
Admit the possibility of His existence	24	26	32	37	30	31	31	34
Do not believe	60	52	43	39	50	45	48	46

The highest number of believers was recorded in 1991. Their share has declined slightly while on the other hand, the percentage of those who are hesitant has gone up.

The believers and those who admit the existence of God were posed the question of whether they took part in church life often, rarely, or never. Thirteen percent answered often and 46% never. This data shows that a portion of believers do not consider churches and religious communities to be necessary, and faith in God is a personal matter for them.

The research also monitored the views on Jesus. One-fourth considered Jesus a great religious teacher, 16% considered Jesus a myth created by early Christians, for 15% Jesus was an exceptional man, for others he was Lord, and a spiritual inspiration for 15%. One-third of those interviewed couldn't identify him or doubted in his existence.

Knowledge of Bible stories is a part of the cultural consciousness of a society. The majority of people thought that modern man should have at least a basic knowledge of this topic. Of all of Czechoslovakia's citizens, one-third knew the story of *The Birth of Jesus* in detail; one-third had partial knowledge, and the last third had little or no knowledge of this story. One-third knew the less-known story of the *Conversion of Paul* in detail or partially and two-thirds knew little or nothing.

When analyzing the replies about the most famous story, insufficient knowledge among young people appeared. Twenty-two percent knew the story of the *Birth of Jesus* in detail, but amongst students, only 14%, the lowest percent of all groups. Secondary and university students' knowledge was, in general, very poor. Thirty-one percent stated that they knew nothing about this story. The situation in the group of apprentices was better. Twenty-one percent of apprentices were familiar with the story of the *Birth of Jesus*.

Opinions on the Bible complete the mosaic on cultural orientation of the society. Forty percent of people characterised the Bible as a collection of the ideas of Saints, their manuscripts, conceptions, and experiences. Thirty percent stated that it was a religious doctrine. Twenty percent connected the Bible with the Ten Commandments, with the religious interpretation of the world. Ten percent could not answer. Again young people, especially students, possessed the least knowledge.

The majority of the Czechoslovak population had never read the Bible according to research in 1991. Eighteen percent read it rarely, 6% several times a month, 3% several times a week, and as required or occasionally 3%. The individual's relationship with religion is more complicated than just the attitude towards faith in God or evaluation of the importance of religion. The public attitude to religion in the Czech Republic is summarized as follows:

— Believes in God and follows Church doctrine	6%
— Believes in God in their own way	21%
— Doesn't know if they believe	22%
— Is not oriented towards religion	38%
— Doesn't recognize the Church	13%

Only a small portion of the Czech population are believers who are at the same time devoted to the Church. Others create their own point of view on God and on faith.

The connection between the faith of children and the faith of their parents is interesting.

Table 10
In Czech Republic Believes in God (by age – %)

Age	Respondent	Father	Mother
15-29	14	17	23
30-44	20	23	42
45-59	27	34	55
60 +	43	54	69

(Calculation up to 100% are other answers.)

It can be concluded from the tables that the number of believing respondents is closer to the number of believing fathers than mothers, the difference between believers in the fathers' and the childrens' generation increases with age, the biggest differences in the share of believers are between the age groups of mothers.

How the faith has been formatted in families with believing and non-believing parents is shown in the following table.

Table 11
Standpoints on Faith in God of Respondents and their Parents (%)

The respondent's parents	Of His Existence		
	Believes	Admits the possibility	Doesn't believe
Non-believers	3	14	49
One of them admits the possibility of His existence or believes in God	7	22	25
Both believing or admit the possibility of His existence	90	64	26

The majority of people who answered that they believe in God had both parents believing or admitting the possibility of God's existence. It is clear from the table that only 3% of believers had two non-believing parents.

VI. Summary

The Church had obtained a positive position in public opinion and significant support in Czechoslovakia before 1989. However, hopes connected with the Church gradually began to decline. Problems associated with the restitution of the churches' property led to mistrust.

Research discovered that part of the population still found the churches to be very important in society but they didn't want to take part in the activities of such institutions personally. They considered spiritual life to be a private matter without any need for public manifestation. The majority thought about God, not only in a more or less traditional religious way, but especially in a transcendental sense.

The results of the research indicate that, in spite of significant activity on the part of the churches or because of it, Czech citizens are not attracted to churches but want to remain "free" in this area as well.

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Miklós Tomka

HUNGARIAN POST-WORLD WAR II. RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT AND THE PRESENT CHALLENGE OF NEW CHURCHES AND NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

(6 theses)

Hungarian religious development has a highly consistent logic in the periods of World War II, Communism and post-Communist reconstruction. It mirrors socioeconomic changes and successive waves of communist church policy. It has, nevertheless, its own patterns as well. Some of the tendencies mentioned below are explained more extensively elsewhere.¹ Our present task is the presentation of conclusive correlations between different dimensions of social and religious change. Further on we will try to explain

¹ *The Religious — Non-Religious Dichotomy as A Social Problem*, "The Annual Review of the Social Sciences of Religion" 3. The Hague, Mouton 1979, pp. 105-137., *Stages of Religious Change* in: Gannon, Thomas M. (ed): *World Catholicism in Transition*. New York, Macmillan 1988, pp. 169-183., *Church and Religion in a Communist State 1945-1990*, "The New Hungarian Quarterly" Spring 1991, pp. 59-69., *Secularization or Anomy? Interpreting Religious Change in Communist Societies* "Social Compass" 1991.1., pp. 93-102., and *Strukturelle Konzislrresistenz: der ost-mitteuropäischer Katholizismus angesichts des II. Vatikanischen Konzils — am Beispiel Ungarns* in: Kaufmann Franz-Xaver-Zingerle, Arnold (ed.): *Vatikanum II. und Modernisierung*. Paderborn Schöningh 1996, pp. 291-313.

the emergence of new religious groups and movements and the general irritability caused by it.

Thesis 1.

Hungarian social history of the past 50-60 years may be ordered into 5 consecutive intervals on the basis of relations between society and the political power.

The central issue of our classification may be called democracy or, to use a more specific sociological expression, the independence of the social system in contrast to political rule. As key criteria of autonomy and self-determination of society, the existence, quantity, quality, and function of informal and formal groups and social ties are proposed. The prevalence or, reversely, the lack of a social system which is not dominated by formal power determines freedom both of societal development and of individual actions. The complementary dimension is the character and use of political power co-ordinating and possibly controlling and oppressing society.² A description of Hungarian society in the dimension of freedom-oppression, or of social self-determination vis-à-vis state control produces an unfinished sine curve (figure 1). Stages of Hungarian social history on this curve are as follows:

A. Pre-World War II society.

Hungary has had a pre-modern, prevailing rural and community-type "peasant society" with a sturdy political order, growing economic tensions notwithstanding, before 1945. The majority of the population were immobile village-dwellers, earning their living in agriculture. Kinship, local community, and tradition were the undisturbed strongholds of social and cultural stability. Gentry and peasantry, respectively, conservative and rural parties

² Hankiss, Elemér: *East European Alternatives*, Oxford, Clarendon 1990.

dominated the political scene. Religion and church were not differentiated, but nevertheless, central elements of the socio-cultural system. The stability of this social arrangement could not be seriously challenged by contrasting domestic strata and interests (only later by Soviet power).

B. Society under totalitarian rule in late forties and early fifties.

The second stage is the period of Soviet occupation and of a totalitarian system built by Soviet support. Full scale confrontation between society and a political system implanted against Hungarian majority vote by foreign powers characterised the post-World War II period. The Communist takeover succeeded with Soviet assistance against the Hungarian people. The new ruler intended to remodel society. Private ownership was abolished. Social position based on wealth and traditional merits became a reason for persecution. Independent social, cultural, and political organisations were banned. Economy and culture were concentrated in the hands of a totalitarian system as were politics and education. The coherence of the informal social web created, however, a powerful opponent to the formal organisation of the Communist Party and the administration of the state. The political confrontation and fight supported the growth and strengthening of social integration on the one hand, and the stiffening of totalitarianism on the other. Society proved to be the more powerful force of this antagonism. Hungarian totalitarian communism was buried by the 1956 revolution. (The appearance of Soviet divisions had nothing to say against the vitality of non-Communist Hungarian society. The opposition against Russian tanks with bare hands and Molotov cocktails is a better indication of the determination of the people.)

C. Attempted Communist consumer society in the sixties and seventies.

In the third stage, the system of the sixties and the seventies tried to combine Communist rule and organisation with the wealth of a consumer society. This mixture was called "Goulash Communism." Motives for this arrangement came both from the ruled and the ruler. The suppression of the Hungarian Revolution and the insight to be obliged to live for an

unlimited future in Soviet system produced despair and apathy. The destruction of private agriculture and peasant households by the coerced organisation of *kolkhozi* unleashed a broad scale migration into cities and a big social mobility. Forced industrialisation and urbanisation contributed to social atomisation. The manipulation of individual records, regular classification of people by party officials, police surveillance, and the use of denunciations in all these procedures urged everybody to be very careful and noncommunicative in personal relations. A discussion group around a university lecturer could become a target of persecution and sentence just as it would in religious-base, communities. Totalitarian control interrupted the rebirth of all kinds of communities, social groups, and networks, all labeled by the authorities as conspiracy against the state. In the flow of Communist modernisation the social fabric became destroyed. The Party-state systematically hindered the reproduction of an autonomous new system by compulsion and by force. Individuals, though, were able to adapt and find their luck one by one. Instead of an overarching social organisation, models of "piracy," "partisanship," and the outlaw manner of a Robin Hood offered ways of existence and even success. On the other hand, voluntary use of political power looked from below like arbitrariness or maybe like feudal patronage without any deeper law and morality. The perception of such circumstances stimulated extreme individualism and the flight into privacy. Individualism and atomisation were possibly unintended outcomes of the system but welcomed by the state and party leader since the social abstinence of the people guaranteed relative political stability.

D. The period of "liberalisation" and decomposition of Communism in the eighties.

A satisfactory economic situation required a continuous supply of goods, including those of high quality and Western ones. To get them, the state needed credits. The price for this was a continuous liberalisation. The jamming of Western transmissions stopped in the late fifties. World receiver appeared in the shops. A growing number of Western (American) programs were shown on Hungarian TV by the beginning of early sixties. Added to

this, prison sentences for political reasons became rare. (Hungary signed the Helsinki agreements in 1975. The last priest imprisoned for underground religious instruction was released after the personal intervention of Pope Paul VI in 1977.)

Not only the methods of power changed. In the same period a new generation appeared who had neither the traumatic memories of World War II and the Holocaust, or Stalinism and 1956. This same youth had no direct ties to pre-war traditions and society, either. A big generation gap, the apathy of the parents, and Communist indoctrination implanted in turn much distrust both of the recent past and of the European Christian culture. This young generation succeeded in bypassing Marxist ideology and the centralised party state and planned economy. An autonomous informal system of society emerged both in economy (by a shadow-economy and moonlighting) and in culture and public life (by Samizdat literature) and in ideology and world view (by base communities and religious underground initiatives). Communist political and socioeconomic order became more and more an empty façade. Inherent laws of private economy and autonomous social groups undermined the power of authoritarian politics. The Communist elite, however, preserved their power by moving from party and state bureaucracy into business and private enterprise. A convergence of interests of all important groups directed to a fundamental change of the sociopolitical system.

E. Post-communist society.

The switch in political order initiated immediately the remodeling of all other sub-systems of society after 1990. The state withdrew from the economy. Privatisation of former state enterprises, private property, free market, the influx of Western capital, the change of business and trade orientation from the East to the West, and competition dominated the economy. The change of the role and organisation of the economy and the state set loose social differentiation and growing unemployment. There are enough motives for the development of a civil society of mature individuals and social self-determination. Most people are, however, not yet prepared to take responsibilities and risks. The emergence of a participatory democracy

is a long process. The abolition of paternalist communist structures left gaps in social policy and the social security system. The lack of regulations did not simply produce freedom, but also the uncontrolled domination of the mighty. Communism was not followed by developed capitalism and a social market economy, but by early or "rough" capitalism.

In summation, Hungarian society experienced a hot-cold treatment in the second half of the twentieth century, which produced repeated changes in the patterns of social life. The respective historical periods are separated from each other in three cases by obvious political events. In the fourth case a continuous transition led from one configuration to the next. Switches from one type to another were marked by the following facts and occurrences:

(A to B) — 1945, the end of World War II; Russian military presence for decades; Soviet interference into electoral procedures and into state administration; and finally the international acceptance of Communist political domination in Eastern Europe.

(B to C) — The Hungarian revolution and its suppression (1956); the cruel revenge of Communist leadership; large-scale emigration; loss of hopes in Western political support for democracy; radical reshaping of agriculture into *kolkhosi* (1959-1961).

(C to D) — Late seventies, after-effects of Western 1968 turbulences; Hungarian participation in military intervention in Czechoslovakia oppressing the "Prague Spring" and, as its aftermath, a deep division in Hungarian leadership; general disillusionment caused by failure of "goulash communism"; perception of "limits to growth" worldwide and of growing foreign debts in Hungary.

(D to E) — May 1988: Hungarian Communist party abandoned its claim to a one-party-system and political hegemony; 1989: the party-state and communist system collapsed; 1990: opposition won an overwhelming victory. (The Hungarian Socialist Party, i.e., the liberal wing of former Communist party returned once again in 1994.)

The change of periods is an important feature of post-World War II history. The overall dimensions of social change are not less impressive.

The communist party-state initiated big steps towards modernisation, such as:

- The destruction of the paternalistic sociopolitical establishment and formal order
- The abolition of the feudal rural system of extensive landed property,
- Industrialisation and urbanisation
- The change of social structure, reducing the agricultural population (table 1)
- Increasing the level of compulsory and that of expected education (table 2)³

Table 1
Occupational Patterns in Hungary, 1949-1990 (%)

Strata	1949	1960	1970	1980	1990
Managerial, professional	2	3	5	8	11
Clerical	8	14	21	22	22
Self-employed artisans, shopkeepers	8	2	2	2	4
Skilled workers	11	16	19	23	26
Semi or unskilled, workers	17	27	29	28	24
Self-employed farmers	47	20	2	1	1
Agricultural workers	7	18	22	16	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Agriculture altogether	54	40	24	17	13

³ Official data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, cf. *Történeti Statisztikai Idősorok 1867-1992*. (Historical Statistical Time Sequences 1867-1992) Budapest, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal 1992.

Figure 1

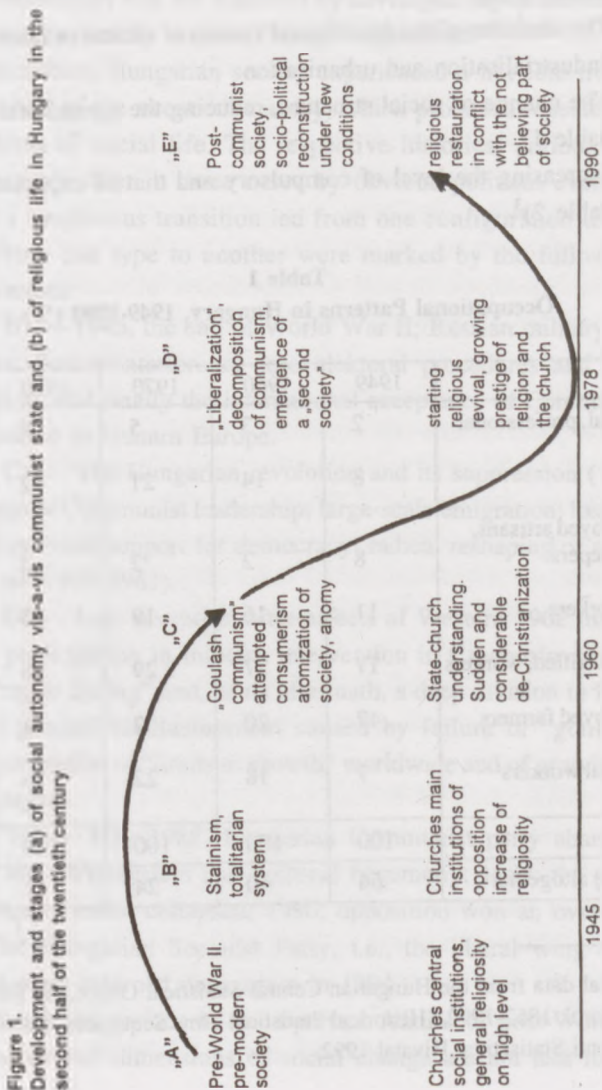


Table 2

Population of Hungary Aged Seven and Over by the Highest Educational Attainment, 1949-1990 (percent)

Education	1949	1960	1970	1980	1990
No formal education	5,6	4,2	2,3	1,7	2,0
Less than 6 class	31,9	27,2	20,2	16,3	12,5
(formerly compulsory) 6 class	44,4	39,9	31,6	23,0	16,7
(now compulsory) 8 class	13,6	21,7	28,5	29,7	32,0
3 years vocational training	4,8	9,7	13,0
4 year high school	3,3	5,1	9,4	14,5	16,2
(At least) 4 or 5 years university	1,2	1,9	3,2	5,1	7,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
High school and university	4,5	7,0	12,6	19,6	23,8

These changes were still executed without public agreement and support. Further on they were enforced abruptly, causing unnecessary social damages. Social and geographical mobility destroyed the social web and traditional culture. Uncertainties and social tensions, "normal" effects of modernisation, were multiplied by Communist policy. According to comparative studies, such as the European Value Study and the International Social Survey Program it is more individualistic and less religious than West-European societies. It has a higher level of social problems (such as divorce, suicide, alcoholism, stress-related diseases, etc.) than societies under comparable socioeconomic conditions.

Thesis 2.

The history of religious and church-life may be divided into five stages respective of five dominating tendencies of religious development similar to sociopolitical periods.

There are different ways to understand the religious change. In our view, de-Christianisation in Communism was basically not a part of secularisation, that is of a growing autonomy, differentiation, and segmentalisation of society, but of social decomposition and anomie. Accordingly, a religious revival occurred hand-in-hand-with social recovery.

Communist totalitarianism was able to destroy all oppositional or independent social and political institutions and networks in the late forties and in the fifties. Its explicit intention was to annihilate religion and the Church too. In this attempt Communism confronted, however, the whole pattern of genuine culture and the informal order of social life. The unity of tradition, convictions, and social regulations with faith in pre-Communist society guaranteed the constancy and the strength of resistance of religion after 1945. The Church, as its institutional expression acted – voluntarily or involuntarily – as the formal representative of the opposition.⁴ This strength later became a weakness. The end of the rigid political polarisation terminated important social functions of post-war churches. The loss of functions was soon followed by the less significant part of the congregation. The interweaving of religion and everyday culture, and of church and the informal system of society, determined the division of the Church history for the last decades into the five successive clusters which structured the political history as well (figure 1).

A. Pre-Communist Hungarian society was characterised by widespread popular piety, a well organised system of religious groups and movements in a very strong Church and a high level of religious participation in every kind of religious practice. Churches ran sixty percent of all schools and half of all social institutions, and financed them from their own properties.⁵ Churches were accordingly among the most important social institutions both in an economic and in a cultural sense.

B. In the totalitarian phase of Communism churches became the only institutions of opposition and nonconformism and targets of religious per-

⁴ Gönner, Johannes: *Die Stunde der Wahrheit*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang 1995.

⁵ András, Emmerich — Morel, Julius: *Bilanz des ungarischen Katholizismus*. Munich, Heimatwerk 1969; Tomka, Miklós: *Religion und Kirche in Ungarn. Ergebnisse Religionssoziologischer Forschung 1969-1988*. Vienna, UKI-IKS 1990.

secution.⁶ Hundreds of priest were imprisoned and tortured.⁷ Churches symbolised national cultural heritage and the devotion to continuity – in contrast with the revolutionary messianism of Communism. Even non-believers joined the church for its sociopolitical functions. Religion and the identification with the Church became the best indicators of the relations to pre-Communist traditions on the one hand and to Communism on the other. As an expression of anti-Communism, religious practice increased in the late forties and early fifties reaching higher levels than ever before. This period came to an end with the suppression of the Hungarian revolution. The collapse of open opposition and the general helplessness after 1956 resulted in a cultural and religious crisis as well.

C. *The new strategy of survival* avoided explicit confrontation. People saw no alternative to pretend formal acceptance of Communism. General accommodation with the sociopolitical system had its equivalent in the field of religion as well: the Christian-Marxist dialogue,⁸ strongly manipulated by the state. The Vatican and Hungarian state started a dialogue as well. Its early fruit was an agreement (1964).⁹ It gave Kadar and the post-revolution system international recognition which had been refused by other countries up to that moment. Diplomatic efforts and a dialogue of philosophers did not have much influence on either the general practice of power or on the people. The loss of oppositional hopes, Communist “modernisation,” the destruction of cultural tradition and the atomisation of society had, as a side-effect, a drastic secularisation. The public role of churches disappeared

⁶ Hainbuch, Friedrich: *Kirche und Staat in Ungarn nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. München, Rudolf Trofenik 1982.

⁷ Hetényi, Varga Károly: *Papi sorsok a horogkereszt és a vörös csillag árnyékában* (Destinies of priest in the shadows of the swastika and the red star), I-III, Abaliget, 1992-1996.

⁸ Mojzes, Paul: *Christian-Marxist Dialogue in Eastern Europe*, Minneapolis, Augsburg 1981.

⁹ Stehle, Hansjakob: *Eastern Politics of the Vatican 1917-1979*, Athens, Ohio University Press 1981. Dupuy André: *La diplomatie du Saint Siege apres le IIe Concile du Vatican*. Paris, Tequi 1980.

almost completely. The state managed to isolate them. Religiosity diminished to 10 to 15 percent of its former size, within less than two decades.

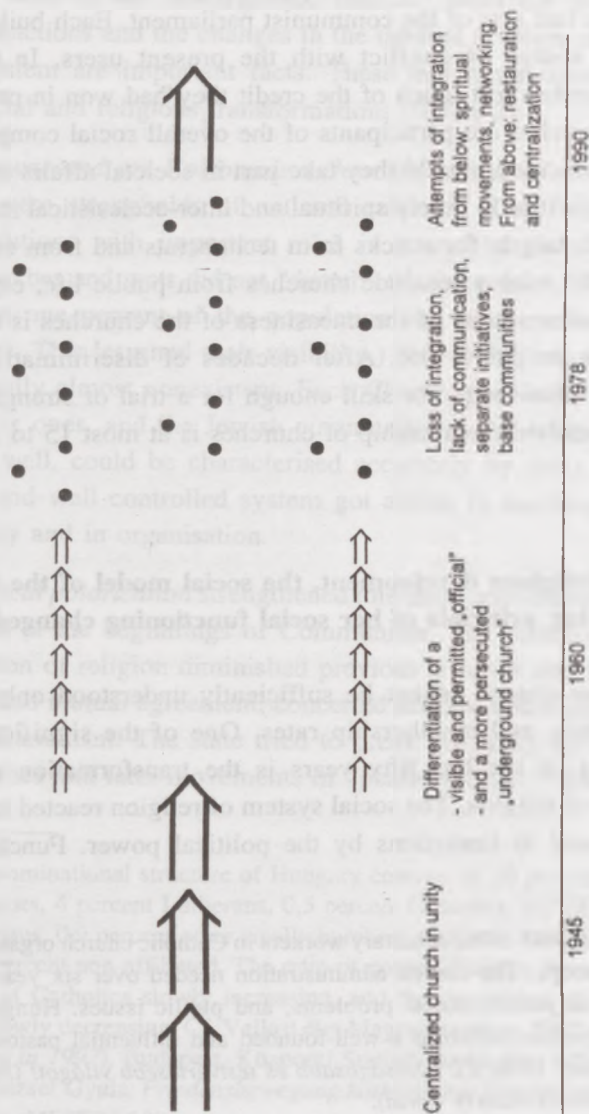
D. Rapid de-Christianisation came to an unexpected end in 1978. In most fields of religious life, a revival started in contrast to the former decline. Religious communities with their religious and profane activities became precursors of social reconstruction and won accordingly public acceptance and reputation. The general loss of credibility and support of the Communist system was counterbalanced by the exaggerated prestige of the churches and by excessive expectations from them. Grassroots groups and their charity work, up to then persecuted by the state and ignored by church administration, nurtured dreams about a Church which could solve all social problems. In a state of euphoria, people supposed that the churches could translate their nostalgias into reality, re-establish the undifferentiated culture and organic society of earlier history and heal all the injuries caused by Communism and "its" modernisation.¹⁰ These hopes also contributed to the increase of religious participation. (The increase started, however, from a very low level. Participation and an identification with the Church represented only one sixth or less of society, prevailing old and rural people.)

E. The final stage was introduced by an overall sympathy for religion and "historic churches" as models of social reconstruction and representatives of cultural heritage.¹¹ In a legal and political context, the state attempted to re-establish churches as public actors. This endeavor coincided with the opinion of the majority. The people and the media waited for the social and political contributions of the churches in the creation of a democratic new order. Churches were overcharged with these demands. Their first efforts were concentrated on their own restoration. They did not have much energy to care about growing social and societal pro-

¹⁰ Zulehner, Paul M. (et.al): *Kirchen im Übergang in freiheitliche Gesellschaften. Zur gesellschaftlichen Herausforderung der christlichen Kirchen in Ost (Mittel)Europa*, Vienna, Pastorales Forum 1994.

¹¹ Nielsen, Niels: *Revolution in Eastern Europe. The Religious Roots*, Maryknoll, Orbis 1991.

Figure 2.
Structural model of the social system of religion and its transformations in Hungary in the second half of the twentieth century.



blems.¹² In contrast, they put great emphasis on their own institutions and requested financial support from the state for this. The restitution of church property, nationalised at the beginnings of Communism had been decided in one of the last acts of the communist parliament. Each building became, however, a source of conflict with the present users. In the resulting quarrels, churches lost much of the credit they had won in previous years.

Now churches are participants of the overall social competition. They are as yet undecided, should they take part in societal affairs or should they limit their activities to purely spiritual and inter-ecclesiastical matters. In any case, they are targets for attacks from technocrats and from ex-Communist socialists, who wish to exclude churches from public life, especially from politics. Another source of the uneasiness of the churches is the weakness of Christians in public life. After decades of discrimination, believers have neither knowledge nor skill enough for a trial of strength in politics. And the committed membership of churches is at most 15 to 18 percent of society.

Thesis 3.

Parallel to religious development, the social model of the Church, i.e., the dominating principle of her social functioning changed in 5 steps.

Religious change cannot be sufficiently understood only in terms of belief, practice, and membership rates. One of the significant religious developments of the last fifty years is the transformation of the social organisation of religion. The social system of religion reacted to Communist persecution and to limitations by the political power. Functions fulfilled

¹² Between 1990-1996, voluntary workers in Catholic church organised more than 400 charity groups. The church administration needed over six years to prepare a statement about justice, social problems, and public issues. Hungarian Catholic Bishops Conference published a well-founded and influential pastoral letter of 70 pages in Summer 1996. Cf. *Igazságosabb és testvériesebb világot!* (For a more just and more brotherly/sisterly world).

earlier by the organisation of the Church had to be taken upon by religious individuals and communities. The informal part of the religious system formalised itself as an "underground church." Both the guaranteeing of necessary functions and the changes in the internal division of labour in the religious system are important facts. These metamorphoses followed the steps of social and religious transformations (figure 2).

A. *Pre-war and pre-Communism churches* possessed a religious monopoly and were strongholds of national culture.¹³ They were recognised public institutions with important roles in a societal division of labour. (Smaller churches and sects did not "disturb" this impression. They accounted for less than one percent of the population and were rooted in marginal social groups. This lessened their visibility.) Non-belief was both officially and unofficially almost nonexistent. Each Church, the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox ones, and the Jewish community, as the religious sphere as a whole as well, could be characterised accurately by unity. Unity and a centralised and well controlled system got across in teaching and beliefs, in community and in organisation.

B. *Political polarisation* strengthened this unity both between and inside the Churches at the beginnings of Communism. The common enemy and the persecution of religion diminished previous rivalries and tensions. Survival demanded mutual agreement, concerted actions, and a joint opposition against totalitarianism. The state tried to break this unity by creating "national" churches and later movements of "peace priests."¹⁴ These remained

¹³ The denominational structure of Hungary consists of 70 percent Catholics, 19 percent Calvinists, 4 percent Lutherans, 0,5 percent Orthodox, 0,5 percent Jews, 0,1 percent Unitarians, 0,9 percent other small churches, sects and New Religious Movements, and 5 percent non-affiliated. The ratio of non-affiliated is strongly increasing, and the ratio of Catholics slowly increasing, and the proportion of Calvinists and Lutherans is slowly decreasing. Cf. Vallási élet Magyarországon 1992-ben. (*Religious life in Hungary in 1992*), Budapest, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal 1993.

¹⁴ Orbán, József Gyula: *Friedensbewegung katholischer Priester in Ungarn 1950-1956*. Budapest, METEM 1996.

small dissenting groups, often forced by torture and manipulation, not in the slightest degree able to weaken this unity. Society felt itself oppressed and supported the only institution which encountered tyranny.

(Contrary to the situation of big churches, the story of sects is a very specific part of the picture. Sects appeared one by one in the foregoing fifty or hundred years in Hungary and had an insignificant position. Society and the state were suspicious of such nonconformisms, often with fundamentalist beliefs, and emotional and exclusivist religiosity. Sects were accepted by public opinion as no way equal to big "historic" churches. The terminology is in itself interesting. Some churches are labeled "historic" to stress their role in the creation of national identity and culture. In the name of group cohesion, these churches are valued higher than churches without such a role and dedication. Post-war Hungary tried to break with historic ties and promptly established political and legal equality of all denominations and religious groups. The existence of a "religious freedom" could be demonstrated with the acknowledgement of these groups. Twelve small churches were recognised in 1987¹⁵ with an estimated total membership of about 100,000 people. They did not represent, and did not have the reputation of representing, pre-Communist culture or society. Accordingly, on the political level they were no danger for the Communist system. Most sects did not become objects of religious persecution during Stalinism or in the post-1956 period. On the contrary, their "equality" with the big churches was continually emphasised.)

C. The unity of society and the big churches and the inner homogeneity of the churches themselves collapsed at the moment of disintegration of the social system and of hopes and dreams concerning national self-determination. Post-revolutionary Hungary looked like fleeing members of a defeated army. Churches lost public support. There was no like-minded public any more. Officials of the churches felt it unavoidable to accept negotiations and agreements with the Communist state. The Church as a formal institution had no choice but to accept the Communist system as a given reality. The formalisation of this acceptance consisted in agreements

¹⁵ Tájékoztató a Magyarországon működő egyházakról és felekezeteikről. (Information about churches and denominations working in Hungary) Budapest, Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal (State Office for Church Affairs) 1987.

between state and Church and in a regular formal exchange between state officials and Church dignitaries. The state gained a liberal outlook by stressing the existence of religious freedom. In fact, the new relation limited religious persecution and made the ordination of bishops possible. (The nominees had to first be approved by the state.) This settling was no solution for the believers. The "co-operation" and "mutual understanding" of state and Church have had a serious drawback. The official organisation of the Church *de facto* decided not to work with youth and not to promote community life. People who thought that religious education and community would be essential for their children and their own life, had to take care of it themselves – outside of permitted Church life and persecuted by the state. Religion and Church split into two realities with basically different conditions. The existence and self-realisation of the Church required different behaviour on the institutional and on the individual and communal level. The different strategies were executed partly by different people. Often they did not even know about each other, and less about the operations of each other. Secrecy was a necessity of survival at both levels. As a consequence, the two levels of the Church became more and more independent from each other, and more and more suspicious of each other. Communist state did not hesitate to use and increase these tensions.¹⁶

D. Religious persecution provoked the emergence of underground activities from the very beginning of Communism. A growing number of small religious groups and base communities arose in the sixties and seventies. Their number was about 4000 at the end of that period. The eighties brought new developments concerning Church structure. The double-track functioning proceeded, but obviously without any integrating frame above or below. The formal organisation of the Church guaranteed religious

¹⁶ András, Emmerich: *Conflicts in Hungary's Church over Two Different Pastoral Concepts: The Episcopacy and the Base Communities*, Vienna, Hungarian Institute of the Sociology of Religion 1982.

services and conformation of priests. In everyday matters and in public life, it was almost totally paralysed or non-existent. Religious presence in work organisations, in the neighbourhood, in social affairs, or in culture was realised by initiatives of individuals without any formal institutional background. Such private ventures had to be limited to a small scale and to be isolated to minimise the dangers of persecution. Co-operation between different religious undertakings was almost impossible. The general atomisation has had its reflection in religious organisation.

(In the age of Communist persecution of Church and of base communities, small and bigger Churches had similar chances to fulfill their vocations. Organisations and institutions were destroyed, paralysed or manipulated by the state. Real religious life was realised in intimate groups. Both small Church members and non-believers drew conclusions which became important in later years. They declared the lack of institutional superstructures an advantage. They stressed the social similarity and functional equivalence of all Churches independent of their size. They defined religion as a private or face-to-face relation not legitimated to interfere with phenomena on the macro-level of society. They rejected especially the public participation of the Church institution. Big churches experienced Communist authoritarianism and centralism as a substantial limitation of their lives. Small churches had nothing to lose but won a much better position compared to the bigger denominations.)

Religion and the Church worked for decades in dispersion, as a world of "islands" without bridges and connections. Institutions, as the small number of denominational schools, weeklies, Christian intellectuals, and base communities were yet accepted as informal representatives of the Church. The growing number of Christian groups and actions and the openness of Christian intellectuals for dialogue with non-believers produced sympathy for religion and Church all around Hungarian society. The atmosphere of expected political changes urged a new way of thinking as well. Base communities and separated religious initiatives looked for communication and co-operation with each other. A process of networking started. Spiritual movements and religious youth organisations appeared and began to work as semi-legal institutions. The base Church, full of vitality, started with discussions about a new type of Church structure integrating both the ini-

tatives and democracy from below and the hierarchical principle and organisation of the official Church. The quick political change gave the development a different direction.

E. The change of the political system transformed place and role of churches in society. Churches were acknowledged as important social and cultural movements which should have formal representation. The state, as well as the media, needed official partners representing religion and the churches. Only bishops and similarly legitimised representatives meet the requirements of politics and state administration. They were accepted by the state as authorised representatives and spokespersons of the Churches. Further, on matters of state and of "historic" churches, they met in restitution and restarting denominational institutions in culture, healthcare, and social services.

The new religio-political pattern carried three important results. Churches were tempted and coerced to centralise their organisation into systems comparable to modern bureaucracies. They did not have the experiences nor staff, only the historic reminiscences of a clergy-centered church. Nevertheless, bureaucratisation became accepted. Initiatives from below, the decisive forms of religious life in previous decades, were at best forgotten by the official institution. Sometimes they were suspected to be a danger for religious orthodoxy and unity. (The same arguments can be used even more against small churches.) There may be intrinsic reasons for the present form of organisation of big churches. Former disintegration has to be overcome. Centralisation may possibly offer help. The prestige of the clergy has to be raised and its influence should be increased in the interest of the Church. The fact, however, that the current leaders, representatives, and speakers of the Churches were the most isolated and persecuted people a few years ago makes any dialogue with the world and with non-Christian groups and politicians difficult.

Churches seem to hesitate on the question of whether they should be present all around in society, or should they create a Christian "pillar" (or

ghetto) with its own organisations and institutions. This very framework preferred the concentration on denominational institutions, such as schools, student hostels, and homes for the aged. Their reopening received higher priority than any other pastoral task.

The third result is the monopolisation of religious issues by the Churches. About 55 percent of Hungarian society declares to be religious "on its own" without specific denominational ties. At least half of this group has no visible religious practice and even if they call themselves a "Catholic," "Calvinist," or "Jew," they have no formal affiliation to any Church. This group has no representation in the debates about religion. On the other hand, religion is excluded from state universities and public institutions and locked into denominational institutions. The present arrangement is an interesting compromise of different church interests. Big churches hoped for their institutional public presence supported by the state. A coalition of small churches and Socialist and Liberal Parties prevented the accomplishment of such ideas. Small churches, sects, and New Religious Movements opted for a religious presence strictly inside the boundaries of the denomination. Such limitations have, however, a totally different meaning in the Catholic Church with its seven million nominal and over one million committed members, thousands of priests and hundreds of institutions and, the Unification Church with its two hundred (or less) members. Small churches face a principal tension between their hostility to a public presence and the role as exercised by a church and their need for visibility and acknowledgement. A solution may be a liaison with political movements formally independent from the Churches. A side effect of the Church controversy is a growing political rapprochement between "historic" churches and Conservative Parties, respectively between small and new churches and the Liberal Parties.

Thesis 4.

Atomisation of society and isolation of individuals by Communism nurtured mistrust and tensions between people with different experiences of life.

Social change in Communism is not a hypotheses but a fact. Explicit intentions of Marxist ideology and the Communist party-state to create a "new society" is well known too. Specific features of atomisation, the systematic retardation of social regeneration, and, as a result, the anomic conditions are evidence as well. Society continued to exist, nevertheless. New social formations emerged in different periods as well. Therefore we cannot avoid the question about the integrating and differentiating principles of the new structures. We will concentrate on differentiations in religious milieus. The most dividing topics are presumably acceptance or refusal of social career in the Communist period, and the present cooperation with society or "pillarised" isolationism. The same topics may be formulated in a principal and ideological way too. The central point of dissent is in both cases the evaluation of "the world," i.e., of fellow-citizens, of political parties, of existing social institutions, etcetera, as good or bad, as capable and worthy for dialogue or as enemies of Church and believers.

The frame of reference is, in any case, the common historical experience of social discrimination on the basis of ideologies and of conformity to the Communist system. This discrimination did not end with the collapse of Communism. Material, political, and symbolic capital accumulated in the last decades does exist further on. As mentioned before, religiosity was – and maybe is – the best indicator for the relations both to traditionalism and to Communism. Consequently there is a strong correlation between ideological positions and socioeconomic status. One may have a first impression, that this kind of socio-ideological polarisation is similar to European development. It may be so. A second look gives evidence of the strength of socio-demographic determinants of religiosity or non-religiosity, which is in Hungary (and presumably in Eastern Europe in general) different from the European average (table 3).

Table 3

The Proportion of Explained Variance (R^2 of regression analysis) of Practiced Religiosity, as Explained by (a) the Previous Religious Practice of the Parents in a Time when Respondent was 11-12 years old and (b) age, Education and Urbanisation of Residence of respondent – in 11 Countries (percent)

The explaining strength (R^2 in percent) of	(a) Religious family tradition	(b) Age, education and urbanisation of residence
Austria	18,056	15,380
Australia	10,402	3,088
Germany, Federal Republic	21,071	9,630
Germany, former GDR	23,553	9,420
Great Britain	13,297	10,470
Hungary	26,253	22,683
Italy	8,274	9,146
Netherlands	22,330	7,934
Norway	18,975	12,868
Slovenia	***	16,924
United States of America	5,819	6,672

Socio-demographic data predict religious belief or non-belief, participation or non-participation in most countries more or less. The most decisive determinants are the family background on the one hand and criteria as age, urbanisation of the place of living and education on the other. Both types of criteria, particularly socio-demographic data have a stronger determining force in former Communist countries (particularly in Hungary), than elsewhere. Religion and belief are, in East Central Europe, socially more determined, than elsewhere in Europe.¹⁷

Determination is certainly not total. The Communist state tried to influence social careers. People tried to enforce their own intentions. The Communist state used formal instructions, a bureaucratic organisation, a

¹⁷ International Social Survey Programme (ISSP): 1991 survey on religion.

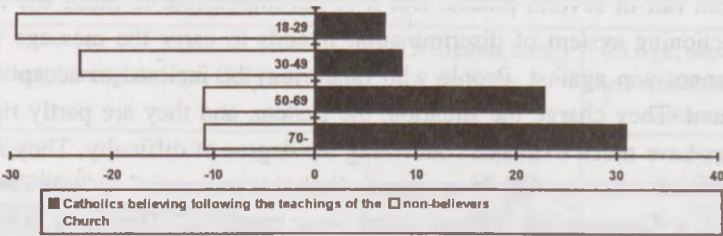
police force, a system of informal control, and of denunciations. People grew accustomed to these hindrances and tried to learn how to overcome or bypass them. People who did not want to accept Communist ideology and politics had disadvantages as compared to supporters of the system. They needed bigger efforts to succeed. A steeplechase is full of obstacles. You can fall in several places. But it is not impossible to make the run. A functioning system of discrimination intends to carry the message that you cannot win against. People who failed may be inclined to accept this statement. They charge the situation, the system, and they are partly right. Losers have much evidence concerning the degree of difficulty. They may support each other saying, "you cannot climb this mountain" or "you cannot succeed in Communism without losing your integrity." They may refer to almost general experiences in their milieu. And they may become suspicious against the few who succeed.

Mistrust was directed originally against the Communist system and against people who managed the situation. If the disadvantageous social, economic, political, and cultural conditions and differences remain, suspicions may be generalised. Growing social differentiation induces social tensions. Individuals with no luck in profane milieu accuse the world, pluralism, Western ideas, the liberals, the old or the new upper strata. This happens very often in post-Communist society in lower strata, among the elderly, in culturally isolated milieus, especially among Christians and among persons who lack the linguistic capacity to communicate with different minded people. Such individuals may conclude that survival requires a protected space, "niches" undisturbed by the free market of ideas and political aspirations.

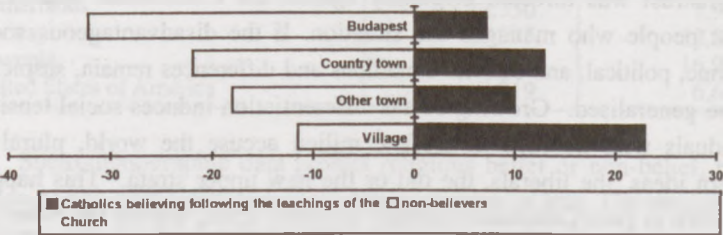
All people, and non-Christians, who suffered discrimination but in spite of it, preserved good relations to colleagues and acquaintances, believers or not, and sometimes managed to make a good career hold another view. They argue on the ground of their own experiences, that even Christians were able to reach certain positions in Communist society. Such people forget sometimes, that their own example is an exception, which was possible only with particular luck, at rare moments, under specific conditions. They

Figure 3.

The ratio of Catholics believing "following the teachings of the Church" and of non-believers in different socio-demographic settings
1. Age



The ratio of Catholics believing "following the teachings of the Church" and of non-believers in different socio-demographic settings
2. Place of living



The ratio of Catholics believing "following the teachings of the Church" and of non-believers in different socio-demographic settings
3. Education

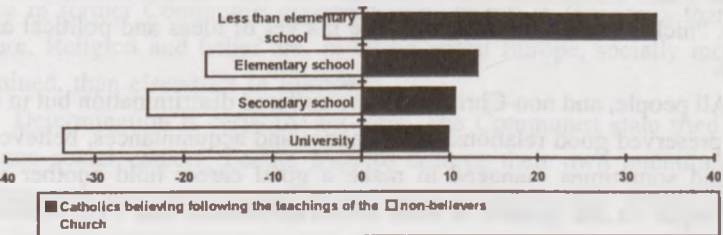
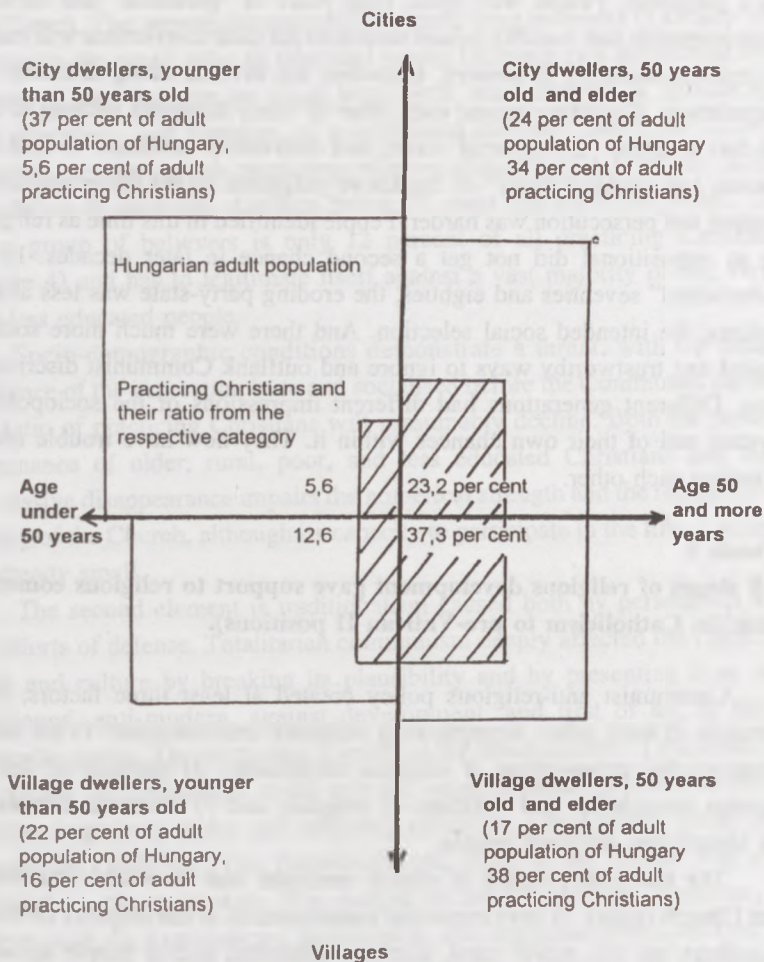


Figure 4.

The distribution of Hungarian adult population and of practicing Christians according to age and the place of living



may overestimate their experiences and say that the only requirement was hard work and to become indispensable. They charge unsuccessful Christians with laziness.

Both positions recall individual evidence. Both learned to accept one's own judgment. People who spent long years as "partisans" and suffered discrimination and possibly prison sentences for their convictions will hardly accept contradicting evidences. Churches are divided along different life experiences. Christians accuse each other of being dishonest because of this or that position. Both social status and individual contacts to non-believers are used as "proof" of the above judgment. In the fifties and sixties control and persecution was harder. People identified in this time as religious or as oppositional did not get a second chance in later decades. In the "liberalised" seventies and eighties, the eroding party-state was less able to enforce the intended social selection. And there were much more socially tested and trustworthy ways to ignore and outflank Communist discrimination. Different generations had different impressions of the sociopolitical system and of their own chances within it. They now have trouble understanding each other.

Thesis 5.

All stages of religious development gave support to religious conservatism (in Catholicism to pre-Vatican II positions).

Communist anti-religious policy created at least three factors, independent of each other, strengthening religious traditionalism: 1) the socio-demographic composition of religious community, 2) attempts of defense against persecution and criticism of religion, and 3) the cultural isolation of church and religious people.

The marginal position of church members and the social structure of the Church (figure 3) have important consequences. If the majority of church members are old, and/or rural, and/or uneducated, and/or people distanced from public life, this may facilitate communication in the respective low strata milieus, but makes difficult the active presence and the influence of

younger, better educated city dwellers in the church community. Accordingly there is tension inside the Church between the different groups and positions. In any case, the numbers of traditional groups tends to make the whole Church traditional.

There is another tension. It is the consequence of the cultural lag of the Church. The uneven representation of practicing believers in society and especially the small ratio of educated young believers is a substantial hindrance to any dialogue on equal terms with non-believers of similar age and education. The pressure of a traditional majority inside the Church worsens the situation. A practicing religious minority of 5-6 percent in the population of adult city dwellers below 50 years has a difficult stand. The same group of believers is only 12 percent of all practicing Christians (figure 4) and has to legitimate itself against a vast majority of old, rural, and less educated people.

Socio-demographic conditions demonstrate a threat: with the disappearance of the generation born and socialised before the Communist period, the ratio of practicing Christians will presumably decline. Both the present dominance of older, rural, poor, and less educated Christians and their successive disappearance impairs the numerical strength and the reproductive ability of the Church, although its capacity to participate in the life of society is already small.

The second element is traditionalism caused both by persecution and by efforts of defense. Totalitarian communism deeply affected the Christian faith and culture by breaking its plausibility and by presenting it as old-fashioned, anti-modern, against development, and first of all, as being basically wrong. The party-state controlled the whole system of transmission of culture. Accordingly it could exercise large amounts of power in determining important topics and majority positions. The Church could only accept the challenge. The framework and logic of the debate was also dictated by the party-state. The answer of the Church was, therefore, to always look for explanations, justification, and legitimation in questions set by the party-state. The answers always remained elusive. In addition to this rank order of ideological debates, the Church reacted more and more

nervously to its minority position. As the cause was identified in communist church policy, the answer was distance to, and withdrawal from, profane life and society. A special kind of escapism was developed by glorifying the past, by referring to eternal and unchangeable values and ideals, and by condemning the present.

All this could happen because of socio-cultural isolation. The Iron Curtain separated Central and Eastern European churches from Western cultural developments. Systematic control prevented any Christian presence in public life. And persecution hindered communication and co-operation between different groups of believers of the same Church. The only stable basis of identity Christians could refer to was their tradition.

(It would be a challenging topic to discuss the adequacy of modern religious thinking to conditions of persecution. In any case the intransigent position to Communism of a Pius XII was easier to understand and to follow than the openness of a John XXIII. I am unable to work out this issue extensively. I share, however, the opinion that belligerent oppositional positions of East European churches created an intrinsic barrier against perception and acceptance of ideas of dialogue and detente.)

Traditionalism, however, had its roots in Hungarian history and in the thinking and behaviour of the Catholic Church before the Second Vatican Council as well. In our context a further fact may deserve some attention. Traditionalism was founded differently in different periods in the observed decades. In pre-World War II (stage "A") socio-cultural conditions of Hungary were generally traditional. In the post-war clash between Hungarian society and the Communist Party, supported by the Soviet Union (stage "B") churches used their Christian milieus to oppose totalitarianism. These milieus were, however, isolated and culturally rooted in the past. Churches stressed "timeless" values and ideas against Communist modernisation. Further, Christians were discriminated against in education, formation, and career during the whole Communist period. Social marginalisation, limited access to political and symbolic power, and total isolation from theology and church life in Western countries promoted conservatism as well.

The differentiation in the Church and the emergence of an “underground church” (stage “C”) produced new conditions. “Below” there were attempts to overcome limiting traditionalism. “Above” traditionalism was preserved with all means. Believers who witnessed their convictions among non-believers, had to present their faith in a way understandable for others. Classical definitions and traditional formulations were often insufficient. Small communities and active religious individuals searched for up-to-date, or even “modern” expressions of their religiosity. Isolated individuals and the Church leadership were in a different position. Their aim was not the presentation of Christian faith in current communication, but the strengthening of traditional teaching. They experienced attacks and persecution and answered with apologetics. Two different views and languages developed in the Hungarian churches in the sixties and seventies.

In the last decade of Communism (stage “D”), a very specific problem came to light. The generation with a pre-war education became old, its members died. The Church as a world of “islands” testified the value of Christianity for the given situation. It suffered, however, from the lack of cooperation and integrated unity. Each of the religious groups and initiatives had to establish and defend its own position without much help from other groups. Very individual positions arose. Neither a central authority nor an accepted board or assembly functioned which would have been able to redress nonconformist positions. Differences in faith and in church discipline produced tensions among individuals and groups. Uncontrolled religious voluntarism and sectarian development became the big challenge in these years. Many believers reacted with a return to traditionalism. It seemed to be safer and easier to refer to old concepts, than to develop new ones in such a situation. New ideas, individual speculations, and groups around charismatic leaders appeared to be systematic destruction of religious life. This experience contributed to the very firm rejection of new denominations and new religious movements some years later.

Finally, post-Communist debates (stage “E”) on the relevance and expected role of churches brought new insights. A clergy and an important part of their flock preserved the memories of former church hegemony.

They expected its re-establishment after the fall of Communism. Now they had to understand that even big churches are minorities in a pluralistic society. This realisation was a shock. Pluralism is regarded as a challenge to the Second Vatican Council. Their acceptance may require generations. The Church has to redefine its social identity. The present defensive position of the churches and the existence of relevant anti-religious groups motivate to conservatism.

Thesis 6.

Anti-sect positions of big churches and anti-big-church positions of small denominations are parts of their identity formation under the conditions of a competition with each other and of political manipulations.

It is a curious fact that big churches in Hungary do not have much of a problem with the smaller ones. Criticism and fight against new religions start from groups which wait for a national cultural rebirth and will instrumentalise the "historic" churches in that enterprise. The political change caused a general uneasiness. Many people judge unlimited Western influence in the economy and culture as a threat to traditional values and ways of life. New religions range among other threatening elements.

Originally the Catholic Church and the two bigger Protestant churches felt no serious challenge from the existence of new sects and new religious movements. Their real problem was the difference between the seventy percent or more people who identify themselves as religious, and the fifteen to eighteen percent practicing Christians. "We will regain influence on people who are lost because of Communist indoctrination," churches think. They will recover after forty years of persecution. Therefore they need the restitution of at least one part of their former institutions.

There is an ideological vacuum in Hungary. This may be advantageous for new churches. Communism especially criticised Catholicism. People interested in religion may have stronger reservations against the Catholic Church than they have against other ones. This fact, once more, is a blessing of small churches critical of Catholicism. Nevertheless Catholicism, and to

a lesser degree, the two big Protestant denominations are culturally dominating the field. Converts to new sects often leave the community after one or two years from the Catholic Church. "The" Church in Hungary is the Catholic one. Words, concepts, and regulations are shaped by Catholicism. Catholicism is powerful even after Communist persecution, without its former institutions and excluded from public life. Small churches have a difficult stand. They fear the recovery of the bigger ones. They vehemently oppose the institutional restoration of "historic" churches. They protest against restitution of church propriety. They will cut all past and future ties between churches and the non-religious domain. These are not soft wishes, but explicit political demands. The sixty formally recognised and the other fifty to sixty small churches have much media coverage. And in public issues or in negotiations with the state administration, equality is understood according to the rule "one church one voice." Small churches argue that restitution, financial or organisational support, access to media, etcetera, are privileges for the big churches which contradict both the ideological neutrality of the state, the separation of church and state, and the principle of equality of churches. Small churches support all political forces which oppose the big ones. They feel they are obliged to fight against the restoration of the big churches. These concentrated actions do not increase the sympathy of the dominating churches for sects and new religious movements.

Big churches think their social weight should be determined by the size of their membership and by the cultural heritage they represent. They think they have a right and an obligation to participate in public life according to their weight. Small churches and new religious movements will either have the same social position, although without a large membership, or they will prevent the public acknowledgement and presence of churches at all. The divergence of interests and goals perpetuates the tension between old and new churches.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PRIVATE RELIGION IN POLAND 1990-1994¹

I. Religion and Social Change in Poland

Both the institutionalisation and the privatisation of religion may be treated as poles on a certain continuum of religion in society. Institutionalisation may be understood as the codification of the component elements of religion – cult, doctrine, and religious organisation. Religions differ from one another on this basis – in some, the degree of institutionalisation of all elements is high, where as in others, either cult or doctrine or organisation have been more developed and codified.

This may also be said of the traditional Christian churches. To the same degree that the Roman tradition has developed its organisation and doctrine, the Eastern tradition has developed its cult. The latter was institutionalised very slowly, and really was a process driven by outside forces rather than arising from its internal essence. The Protestant churches clearly represent a rejection of the external forms of cult – Baptists and Pentecostals radically so – likewise, the organisational aspect is not strongly developed. In making this comparison we must remember the existence of a “generation gap” between these specific traditions. The process of institutionalisation is

¹ This article was prepared on the basis of the results of research conducted with funds from Jagiellonian University.

reflected in the religious aspect of society and the process of privatisation of religion. That is also why, when we compare societies that are to a large degree Catholic or Protestant or both with those that are in the sphere of Eastern Orthodoxy, it is important to consider this basic difference. It, of course, clouds the picture when it is difficult to establish the proportions. To what degree, we may ask, does the low level of religious practice in England come from the presence of low-cult Protestantism, and to what extent from secularisation?

At the same time it seems important that both the institutionalisation and the privatisation of religion are processes that occur over time. There are changes, if not in the doctrines themselves, then in their interpretation. The forms of cult, and likewise the ability of an individual, to understand religious issues (especially if we consider periods of general illiteracy) and permission for personal involvement in issues of faith change over time. The symptoms of the modernisation of consciousness in contemporary societies could not leave religion as a closed area, exempt from the whole context of radical changes. Thus the privatisation of religion in Western European culture is a process that takes place over time and is accompanied by such phenomena as a general increase in education, the fight for equality of pay, the lengthening of the average lifespan, greater ability to fight, until recently, deadly diseases, greater quality of life, the appearance on the field of vision of modern Man of "self-realisation" as an ideal, and so forth. As one may see, these are examples of changes in the human situation on both macro- and micro-scales, and, because of this, there is a change, not so much in the eternal questions of the sense and direction of human life, but in the social framework into which the answers fall.

The institutionalisation and privatisation of religion may be treated as a certain vectors of the power at work in contemporary Poland in a way that is changed and more open than under Socialism. Institutionalisation expresses itself in the actions of the hierarchical Church directed at the terrain heretofore occupied by ideological and organisational competition. The dualism that grew out of the fact that it was the "only" competition was the base of the traditional structures operating in Poland after World

War II. This ideological dualism clearly stabilised the self-definition of individuals and groups on all levels of social activity. In Poland this expansion of institutionalisation has begun to express itself since 1989 in a broad legal initiative aimed at gaining lost ground resulting from the confrontation with Communism. This is the battleground: religious education in schools, the de-legalisation of abortion, the fight to retain so-called "Christian values" in the mass-media, and the Concordat with the Vatican. The Roman Catholic Church in Poland characteristically operates in the framework of an organisational paradigm, that is, a given action grows out from the trunk of the institution. These are not initiatives from below, from society, but they organise and objectify society. The Church, in this arrangement, is the authoritative schoolmaster, and society, its pupil who should accept without question commands, threats, and potential punishments. The religious organisation's social and political activity is presented as part of religion and accepted as appropriate on the strength of deep-rooted justification in the religious sphere – the sanctity of tradition, the sanctity of the institution, supernaturalness, the sanctity of the human as such, the sanctity of the nation and so on.

The vectors that set themselves against institutionalisation are here, amongst others, the pluralism and subjectivism that accompany modernisation. Pluralism replaced dualism and there came about a fall of the confrontational scheme in which the Church and society stood in one corner, and in the other, the Party and Communism. The effect of that fall is – as Tischner said – "the unfortunate gift of freedom." Unfortunate, because that gift is, in reality, terror. Modernity is founded on freedom, amongst others, the freedom of choice, and that freedom becomes a necessity, which has been experienced by Central Eastern European societies as one of the most difficult challenges to appear since 1989.

There are different kinds of freedom and different ways of understanding them. The freedom to define oneself which, as Berger wrote, reaches so far that it has become possible and accepted not only to choose profession, place of work, and one's sexual partner, but also to have an impact on such fundamental things as pregnancy or non-pregnancy. He suggests

that this same freedom of choice reaches to our very roots – to our biological heritage, that which went for eons under the dominion of nature.²

From freedom, which is also a burden that may not be shrugged off, there are different escapes, the mechanisms of which were described by E. Fromm. One such political mass escape from freedom was, in his opinion, Fascism.³ Fromm's formulation has a place for freedom understood as a negative, "freedom from," and as a positive, "freedom to," above all, freedom to love, to an unembarrassed spontaneous existence.

There was also the Socialist freedom which Bauman sees in the context of modernism as a kind of a project competitive to Capitalist freedom and which is, in reality, a source of constraint. Both Capitalist (modernist) and Socialist ideals of freedom and equality have never been realised. Modernism remained, in Bauman's opinion "an unfinished project" and Socialism reached, in the end, the boundaries of absurdity. Equality devolved into uniformity, a brotherhood in an enforced unity, and freedom always found itself at cross-purposes to equality. Post-Modernism emblazoned a new slogan on its banner: freedom, variety, and tolerance. "In practice, the freedom of Post-Modernism," wrote Bauman, "leads to a choice between consumer goods. In order to make use of this benefit, one must first become a consumer. This condition locks out millions of people."⁴

There is also freedom in post-Communist Poland that, amongst other things, makes itself clear in that there are many objects of communal re-

² Berger, P. L. writes: "Modern contraception, for the first time, has made pregnancy or non-pregnancy a matter of deliberate and reasonably reliable decision for millions of individuals. In the most elementary way (and few things are as elemental as those that affect one's body) what before was fate has now become a choice" see: *The Heretical Imperative. Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*, Collins, London 1980, p.13-14.

³ Fromm, E.: *Ucieczka od wolności*, (Polish edition, *Escape from Freedom*), Warszawa, PWN 1978.

⁴ Bauman, Z.: *Postmodernizm a socjalizm*, (*Postmodernism and Socialism*), in: "Literatura na Świecie", 1991/6, p. 278.

sponsibility that do not wish to be relieved of their position by another institution. From this situation arises the different attitudes to all those values that, in the opinion of society, are subject to choice.

What depends on choice and how are the results of a choice achieved? What new choices have shown up among the residents of Poland? And are some choices related to religion otherwise than they were up to this time? Choices depend upon the question "should one chose?" This is a question which the masses rarely faced in the political reality that existed prior to 1989. On those occasions when it arose, the answer had already been stripped of all meaning. Fifty-one percent of adult Polish citizens answered "yes" to the last referendum on the Constitution, which means that almost this same number of people decided not to choose. Three-fourths of adult Polish citizens in some sense voted against political influence of the Roman Catholic Church, saying that this influence is much too large.⁵

It is difficult, however, to compare these results with the situation that existed before 1989 when, as is well-known, the political influence of the Church not only existed in Solidarity Poland but was also unusually strong. At that time, however, questions about the acceptance of this situation were not posed in questionnaires since social support for the Church's activity was universal and seemed only natural, even for sociological experts on public opinion. Questions were posed, and over the course of several years, about trust in various social institutions, amongst them, the Roman Catholic Church. And social trust, such as was given to the Church, was universally recognised, over 90%. Surely the Church's righteous political engagement in politics on the "side of Righteousness" contributed to this.

Thus, we may conclude, choices related to religion affect, amongst others, the vision of the Church for the future of Poland, the role the Church will fulfill, and its shape. This shape is unknown and the conflicts that took place (the mobilisation of different social groups around the question of abortion) are examples of the negotiations that are a part of the new form of Church-society public relations.

⁵ Informator CBOS (CBOS Bulletin of CBOS), no 19/1990.

In a more hidden way this vision involves itself in choices related to the privatisation of the moral-religious sphere. The Church does not have universal control over that which is related to moral norms on methods of birth control, sexual cohabitation before marriage, coping with adultery and the like. The “area of contention” extends to the ambivalent attitude towards homosexuals, divorce, celibate priests, female priests, and so forth. I’m not saying that these are new choices. In 1990, 75% of adults in Poland declared, for example, that “everything is permitted in sex” and certainly this was, neither a choice brought about by the demoralising influence of atheism, nor a universal fit of spite against an overbearing Church. The choice was at that time, just as it is now, deeply rooted in the private way of implementing and interpreting the religious commands on sex and the erotic. What is new is the ability to manifest this sphere – the establishment of homosexual periodicals, organisations, discos, singles classifieds, and the like. In addition, there are the New Religious Movements, amongst them, the ever more popular New Age – but it is difficult to call this a sign of what Western sociologists call the “market of religions” in which a world view may be purchased like goods off a shelf. In Poland this phenomenon has remained at the further edges of the margins of society whereas a real offer of world view, not made relative by competing offers, is found in the religious doctrine of Roman Christianity. Eighty-six percent of the general population in Poland consider themselves to be religious and 64% declare a regular practice. If we take the Dominicans’ tally of Sunday mass attendance as an index, we get a result of about 50%. This second index shows particularly well that the Roman Catholic Church’s institutional fetters on society are also strong, if not on the level of organisation, then in the aspect of cult. Likewise, the sacraments that serve as rites of passage are universally enacted.

This system of belief also shows some of the empirical characteristics of the process of secularisation observed earlier in Western societies brought about, among other things, by industrialisation. Previous observation states that the first beliefs to disappear are: Hell, the Devil, life after death, the immaculate conception, and the resurrection of the body. According to scholarly opinion, the belief that lasts longer than all others is belief in God.

However, the content of this belief is changed in the direction of moving away from a belief in a personal God to a belief in an "indefinite supernatural power."⁶ Therefore, the last study performed in 1990 showed that the majority of respondents did not experience the difference and contradiction implicit in choosing at the same time from the cafeteria of beliefs, "God is an impersonal spiritual power" and "God appears in three persons." The levels of belief in Hell and the Devil in Poland are higher than the data for France or England, societies in which the process of secularisation is advanced, but the ranking remains unchanged.

Therefore, it may be said that we have to work with several contradictions which are not, on the whole, new but fall in a new light. There are also new pressures associated with the process of the institutionalisation of religion in the conditions of change – there appears to be a conflict between the subjectification of society which is divided into separate groups with a variety of different interests, and the Roman Catholic Church as an organisation which formulates its expectations in the language

⁶ S. Bruce documented this point of view in his recent publications. Comparing contemporary religious beliefs to traditional ones he concluded that at present God is rarely thought of as an actual person but as some sort of vague power of our own consciences. The Bible is no longer the word of God but a historical book with some useful ethical and moral guidelines for living. Miracles either did not really happen or they were natural phenomena misunderstood by ignorant peasants. Christ is no longer the Son of God but an exemplary prophet and teacher (...) Heaven and Hell ceased to be real places and became psychological states in: *Religion in Modern Britain*, Oxford University Press 1995, p.16. But it should also be noted, that sociologists do not agree upon interpretation of these changes. Some of them treat it as an evidence of secularisation as a decline of religion, some, as D. Hervieu-Leger, redefine secularisation, as a process of the reorganisation of the work of religion in a society which can no longer satisfy (not temporarily, but structurally) the expectations it must arise in order to exist as such, and which can find no better response (not temporarily, but structurally) to the uncertainties arising from the interminable quest for the means to satisfy these expectations. See: *Religion and Modernity in the French Context: For a New Approach to Secularisation*, Sociological Analysis 1990, 51/ p. S24. In this second perspective secularisation means not a decline in religion but decomposition and re-composition of its traditional forms.

of secular law. The fall in social trust in the Church as an institution could be seen as a sign of this conflict. Also new is the resulting differentiation between the core elite of the Church and the core political elite to which the Church lends or withdraws its support depending upon their attitude. To sum it up, the majority of those elements associated with the Church, either Church-State relationships or society's attitude towards the Church, are new.

The divergence between attachment to cult and the differentiation of moral choices and selectivity in belief and dogma are universal phenomena. It would certainly be very interesting to circulate questionnaires among priests, who in Poland do not belong to social groups questioned about religious beliefs. Who knows whether it might not be that they, when privately and anonymously asked whether they believed in the Devil, might also have serious doubts.

II. Institutionalisation and Privatisation of Religion From an Empirical Perspective⁷

When we speak of the subjective aspect of the process of institutionalisation we are talking about what is known as "institutionalised religiousness" understood as the area of compliance with religious conviction and the religious practices of social groups according to standards given shape by a given distinct religious tradition. On the other hand, the privatisation of religion and its degree may be measured by its "departure" from the official religious pronouncements of a given Church on the behalf of one's own individually reached choices.

The most important index of institutionalised religiousness is the attitude of the believers towards the institution of the Church. This attitude is reflected in their image of the function it fulfills in society, and their acceptance of its activities in particular areas of operation. The respondents'

⁷ On the basis of the conceptualisation only mentioned in this article OBOP (Ośrodek Badań Opinii Publicznej – The Center for Research of Public Opinion) conducted research on a representative sample of 1,054 people from the whole of Poland in November of 1994.

answers to these questions provide data about society's ideas on the subject of the place of the Church in public and private life. The level of trust in the Church as an institution is an index of the degree of agreement between society's expectations and the experience of reality.

On the other hand, convictions that deal with belief and morality may be assigned to the aspect of individual religiousness. They may become the base on which we answer the question of how religion is present in the private sphere as opposed to the public sphere.

III. A Social Portrait of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland (against the background of other institutions)

Respondents were given two questions that dealt with the influence and authority of several institutions, amongst them, the Roman Catholic Church, and then they were asked to assess the influence of the Church in particular areas. Below we present the results:

Table 1

Number of Points	Institution					
	Government	Parliament	National Bank	Big Enterprises	Mass-Media	Roman Cat. Church
1	2.6	1.6	2.5	2.8	1.0	2.2
2	3.1	3.0	4.1	3.7	3.1	2.6
3	5.2	5.4	5.6	7.3	3.6	4.5
4	5.7	5.5	7.0	9.5	5.0	3.4
5	13.7	11.6	11.1	10.4	9.4	8.5
6	13.4	10.5	9.9	11.3	8.9	10.2
7	6.4	8.5	7.7	9.5	8.7	7.4
8	11.5	12.2	10.1	10.5	12.6	10.9
9	10.2	10.1	8.8	8.6	10.5	10.3
10	9.1	11.7	10.4	8.4	16.6	15.9
11	9.2	11.8	8.6	4.1	14.9	18.8
No Answer	8.2	7.9	14.2	14.0	5.7	5.3

The respondents felt that the Roman Catholic Church has the greatest influence amongst the choices proposed in the cafeteria of institutions. Declarations of the Church's influence clearly outweigh those of the government and parliament. According to the respondents, the Church's nearest contender is the influence of the mass media. In the evaluation of the influence of these two institutions, the study group had the least problems, which expresses itself in the low percent of "don't know" answers.⁸

In the opinion of the respondents, are the influences of these institutions too large or too small? Of the respondents, 42.5% consider the power of the Church appropriate and 44.4% feel that it is excessive. The majority (61.6%) believe that the government and parliament have too little power whereas only 6.6% find the Church's power insufficient. The answers assessing the power possessed by the Church are positively correlated with declarations of faith, religious practice, and individual prayer, as well as assigning the Church's role as an intermediary in making moral decisions.

The area of influence of the Church, in the opinion of those studied, takes different shapes in different spheres. Its influence is the smallest in the areas of law and legal judgment, commerce and social welfare. Most subjects rated the influence of the Church at between one and six points on an 11-point scale but a small number of subjects (average of 3-4%) felt that the influence of the

⁸ The complete results of the answers to this question appeared as follows:

Name of Institution	1	2	3	4	5	6
Government	3.6	12.5	45.8	24.8	3.5	9.7
Parliament	2.3	14.7	50.4	20.3	2.4	9.9
NBP (National Bank of Poland)	1.4	13.8	55.7	8.5	1.2	19.4
Business enterprises	1.6	18.2	43.5	16.0	1.6	19.0
Mass-Media	1.9	11.4	61.6	13.7	1.8	9.8
Roman Catholic Church	14.7	29.7	42.5	5.6	1.0	6.5

Where: 1 means – decidedly too much authority, 2 – too much authority, 3 – appropriate authority, 4 – too little authority, 5 – decidedly too little authority, 6 – hard to say.

Church may be assigned 10 to 11 points in these areas, which is the maximum allowed on the scale. The assessment of influence in such areas as family life, morality, politics, or norms governing sex and eroticism appears otherwise. When we take scores of 8 to 11 (on an 11 point scale) together, the following hierarchy of areas of Church influence appears:

1. Family Life – 57.6%
2. Morality – 57.2%
3. Politics – 51.3%
4. Education and School – 47.1%
5. Erotica, Sex – 46.3%
6. Science, clarifying the laws that govern the world – 40.8%

For comparison, “law and judgment” received 14.4%, commerce: 14.8%, and influence on social welfare: 22.4%. The greatest number of 11-point assessments were received by: morality (20.1%), norms for sex and erotica (17.6%), politics (15.8%), and family life (15.7%). The assessment of influence is undoubtedly related to the respondents’ observations of the Church’s activities in particular spheres of social life. The results obtained would therefore show that the Church is seen as not very active in the area of commerce, submitting to the great changes that have occurred since 1989, and likewise, not engaging in the problems associated with social welfare. The Church is perceived as active on a global level, both in family life and customs, as well as in world views through its influence on education and required standards in science.

Of the Polish population, 40.5% give the Church (complete and large) trust, and this trust exceeds that in other institutions such as the army (36.9%), television, radio, and newspapers (26%); and health services (28.4%). The respondents declared somewhat less trust in relation to the police (24.7%) and the educational system (22.3%). The least amount of trust was received by political parties (2.3%), trade and industry organisations (4.6%), judges and the legal system (9.4%), and the parliament (9.9%). At the same time, these institutions received the highest levels of absolute lack of trust, such as political parties (29.0%), parliament (15.4%), judges and legal system (14.6%), trade and industry organisations (14.1%). The respondents had a bit of trouble measuring their trust in the remaining

institutions and more than 18% of them chose the answer "difficult to say," and similarly not many fewer had doubts about judges and the legal system (12.2%). This may be a sign that these institutions are not yet treated by society as essentially influential in a way that shapes social life.

Other churches were added to the cafeteria in order to test the respondents' attitudes towards them. It turned out that the majority displayed little or no trust in them. The results achieved by the Eastern Orthodox Church and Protestant Churches are similar – in both cases 34.3% gave these answers. This amount is significant; it means that one-third of those asked felt that there is reason to believe that the largest of the minority churches in Poland may work against the interests of society. This is even more evident in the case of the "Jehovah's Witnesses," in whom almost 50% of the respondents declared a complete lack of trust. At the same time in all case the number of people who could not express their opinion reached between 40 and 50%. We may also interpret these results as arising from a lack of general information about minority churches, their lack of presence in public life – as opposed to the constant presence both in the mass-media and public events of the Roman Catholic Church. One more interpretation is possible, that the large lack of trust in the minority churches is related to the widespread distaste for religious difference and the stereotypes of the Orthodox believer as a "Ruskie" and the Protestant as a German, beyond the Pale of Polishness. This problem requires further research and these data might provide an interesting point of entrance.

In conclusion, we may assert that in this area the Roman Catholic Church emerges victorious from the confrontation with other institutions. The greater part of the respondents gave it large and complete trust, and, what is particularly essential, quite the opposite of the scant faith awarded to the political parties and parliament. If we add to this the fact that the Church is also considered to be an institution that possess great, and even too great, influence on politics, we may come to the conclusion that the Roman Catholic Church appears as the most serious power that might have an effect on the actions of the country. We may suggest that these feelings will grow in proportion to the frequency of political crises that shake up Polish life with frightening regularity and are tied to the fall of trust in, not only institutions, but also the leading

politicians of the country. In this context the Roman Catholic Church may function in the long run as the one stable and safe structure which is demonstrated in the unity of the declarations and the Church's actions.

This conjecture may be confirmed by the fact that society's trust in the Roman Catholic Church measured with the same questions in 1991 resulted in 32.6%, while 26.6% declared a lack of trust. There appeared a positive change in society's image of the Church, that is, an eight percent growth in the trust and a seven percent fall in declared lack of trust.

The background to these changes is the earlier significant fall in trust in the Roman Catholic Church as an institution, as shown in CBOS (Centrum Badan Opinii Publicznej – Center of Research of Public Opinion) opinion polls, that occurred in the short period of 1989-92. In 1989, 93% of respondents in a national survey agreed with the statement that "the Church works well in the interest of society" whereas only 55% agreed in 1990.⁹ There is no way in which we may ignore this nearly 40% drop as insignificant, although it has been qualified and outright disregarded even among sociologists of religion.¹⁰

⁹ I am quoting from CBOS Bulletin, no 3/1989, no 19/1990. See also Borowik, I.: *Religion and Social Changes in Central-Eastern Europe After the Fall of Communism*, in: *Informaciones Theologiae Eeuropae*, Sonderbruck 1994, p.300.

¹⁰ Among others, the most established sociologist of religion in Poland, the Rev. Władysław Piwowski, commenting on the fall in public trust in the Roman Catholic Church as an institution and critising my article and dismissing the data, wrote in 1992. In the opinion of Dr. Borowik, this fall in recent years is significant. The author does not take into account which Church we are talking about here – the hierarchical (Primate, bishops, priests) or the People of God in their fullest extent. Neither did the respondents take this into account. Thus both the researcher and the researched remain in error because they do not know of which Church they think in: *Głos Niedzielnny*, (*The Sunday Voice* – the Catholic weekly magazine) 1992, no. 21. There is no place for extensive discussion with the position taken by W. Piwowski, but it should be mentioned, that the question given by CBOS for many years contains the word institution and the Church is listed alongside several other institutions, such as the parliament and army. (It was, by the way, also an argument used by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland against the question – namely that the suggestion was made that the Church is not an institution as others are and could not be researched in the same way.)

It seems that the high marks given to the Church's involvements as "appropriate" up to 1989 arose, above all else, from the political situation and the leading role played by the Church as the main opponent of an unloved and unaccepted authority. In 1989 the democratisation of the structure of society toppled the dualistic model, within which there were "good guys" – the Church and Nation, and "bad guys" – the State, the Party, Communists, and Authority. Political foci fell into new places and the slow process of polarisation of what is good and what is bad began anew. At the same time the process of verification of the assessments associated with the past and the PZPR government which, even if we agree with political scientists that they were mystification, it is difficult to expect that they did not have an influence on the actual opinions of the respondents. It seems that we may draw out the following basic conclusion: it is not that the current trust in the Church as an institution is low, but that the trust that was given to the Church before 1989 was higher because, in the eyes of society, there was no competing institution in which society might place its trust. At the moment trust in the Church in Poland is near to that given to the Church and religious institutions in Ireland (46.2%), Northern Ireland (41.3%), and the USA (38.3%).¹¹ Therefore, the political situation that existed at the time the study was performed, as well as the political destabilisation in Poland at the end of 1994, may have affected the level of declarations, and recommends caution in advancing radical conclusions.

IV. Privacy of Religion in Poland

The process of privatisation of religion reveals itself most clearly, as we wrote earlier, in two spheres: faith and morality. In the first case it appears as the selective acceptance of dogma. Selectivity in this area is nothing new, it had already become visible in studies conducted in the 1960s and its degree relies for the most part on surroundings. Sociologists of

¹¹ I am quoting from ISSP- 1991, p. 75.

religion assume that advancing secularisation accompanies the increase in the scope of selectivity of dogma, and that this process, at least in Western societies, proceed in the stated way. That is, in that way that those doctrines declared by theologians to be central to Christianity, such as belief in the existence of God, the divinity of Christ, and the creation of the world and humanity by God, remain the longest at a high level of belief, whereas belief in Hell, the Devil, the resurrection of the body, angels, and Heaven are worn away over time. Attitudes towards dogma is also differentiated in Poland. The highest level is held by belief in God, which in 1994 was declared by 95.7%. That means that even a section of the 12.6% who declared themselves to be undecided in regard to religion believe in God. Nearly as high was belief in such dogmas as God's creation of the world (87.2%), God's creation of humanity (84.7%), the divinity of Christ (79.7%), the Last Judgment (77.0%), and Heaven (75.0%). Less than 70% of the respondents declared belief in Purgatory (68.1%), the resurrection of the body (66.6%), life after death (66.4%), angels (64.6%), and Hell (64.4%). The least believed dogmas were those of Papal infallibility (50.5%) and the Devil (48.2%).

Are these numbers high or low and may they be compared with the results from 1990? Did changes appear in this period that might be interpreted as a long-term tendency and provide a basis for foreseeing the direction of change in the near future?

A comparison with data on belief from the end of the 1970s and 1990 might be surprising. It turns out that not only was there a growth of several percentage points in global declarations of belief, but also more importantly, in the area of the acceptance of particular dogmas, and in particular those, which were the lowest. That means that the acceptance of the dogma of the resurrection of the body grew 30%, Hell 23%, angels 19%, life after death 16%, and the Devil 13%. The questions were the same and the same rigorous 3-point scale was used (1 – yes, 2 – no, 3 – hard to say). This is such a significant growth that it is difficult to explain it as solely, or even mostly, due to the conditions in which the study was done, the type of questionnaire, the sample selection, etcetera. It seems that the observed difference must be acknowledged as an important element of change in the form of the

religiosity of Polish society. But it should be noted that such a significant growth in a short period of time must be verified by other data, in order to confirm the direction of the change and to exclude mistakes that are difficult to explain.

If we treat belief as an index of individual and private religion, which I am opting for here, we may speak of its growth. This thesis may also be contradicted by answers given to solutions that are achieved by a person, more precisely, of their legitimate origin. For most, a person should make decisions on their own, most would not agree with the statement that they should obey the Church. A breakdown of their opinions is presented in the below table:

Table 2

Area of Choice	Ev. sh-d decide for themselves	E-ry s-d be obedient to the Church	Hard to say
1. Politics	93	3.4	3.6
2. Birth Control	81.7	15.4	2.9
3. Child Rearing	79.7	17.6	2.7
4. Divorce	79.1	18.1	2.8
5. Interruption of Pregnancy	75.7	20.3	4.1
6. Form of Marital Vows (Civil or Church)	75.2	22.6	2.2
7. Extra-marital Sex	72.7	23.1	4.2
8. Religious Belief and Practice	67.8	29.8	2.4
9. Marital Infidelity	65.9	29.7	4.4
10. Fasting	55.2	42.5	2.5

Notice the fact that in all cases few respondents have problems with giving an answer (choosing the category "hard to say"). This demonstrates that they have a strong opinion on the given questions. The next essential

issue is that answers of the type "everyone should choose for themselves what they believe to be appropriate," which demonstrate an individualistic option, are popular among respondents not only on matters of morality such as the termination of pregnancy, divorce, and adultery, but also those that are strictly religious. Especially essential here is the remarkable number of respondents who represent the individualistic option in their approach to the religious sphere. "Belief and religious practice" should be the subject of an individual's personal choice in the opinion of close to 70% of the respondents, and only ground 30% believe that in these matters "everyone should obey the requirements of the Church."

These results may be interpreted as not so much as a quarrel between the respondents and the teachings of the Church on religiosity, but as an expression of the individualistic option, the need to decide for oneself and make decisions without the pressure of the Church. It seems that this thesis is supported by, amongst other things, the high percentage of people who believe that even the form of marriage should be the subject of the independent decision of every person. It is known that in Poland over 90% of those who enter into the state of matrimony do so in a church wedding. Therefore, these answers cannot be an expression of hostility towards the practice but, rather, an expression of the need for independence. Not exactly the same, but similarly, we may interpret the answers to moral questions. For example, nearly 50% unconditionally condemn adultery, but not quite 30% believe that on the subject of adultery a person should obey what the Church teaches.

It seems that the received hypothesis about the privatisation of religion is proved by other facts. The attitudes of the respondents to moral issues such as the termination of pregnancy, divorce, and sexual cohabitation before marriage remained unchanged in relation to the declarations from 1990. Only in the case of homosexuality did the percentage of those who condemn, regardless of circumstances, change from 61.7% to 50.8% which may show, among other things, a raising of the consciousness of society.

The moral norms which the Church expects its faithful to keep are questioned in a much greater measure than its dogmas. Particularly few people condemn, in spite of the Church's teaching, undertaking sexual cohabitation without marriage, and even men and women living together without marriage – 53% do not condemn it and 25% excuse it. That shows social acceptance for concubinage is, as is also shown by statistics, gaining in popularity in Poland. In this area appeared another statistically important change in relation to 1990 – nearly 10% of the respondents withdrew their condemnation of this type of behaviour. We know from other research that the Church's commands on sexual behaviour and contraceptives is not socially accepted by adults and even less by the youth. Young people who attend Catholic high schools and theological schools do not differ very much from their peers at state schools in their views on this subject.¹²

J. Marianski performed a comparison of the moral outlooks of students in their final year of high school in 1988/89 and again in 1994 with the result that the moral norms held by Polish youth “may be seen as a symptom of a clear moral crisis.”¹⁵ Again, this particularly touches on moral values because in this case Catholic ethical norms are questioned by a decided majority. Of final-year students, 6.9% considered the use of methods of contraception as prohibited, and 13.8% were against sexual cohabitation before marriage. These results are statistically significantly low when compared with 1988/89 at the edge of 10%.¹³

Of the whole, 54.4% believe that the morality of society would not deteriorate if the majority didn't obey the commands of the church, 11.4%

¹² It is suggested by pilot research I have conducted among students of Catholic high schools and Papal Academy in Kraków, in January 1995.

¹³ See Mariański, J.: *Młodość między tradycją a ponowoczesnością* (*Youth Between Tradition and Modernity*), Lublin, 1995. On page 156 Mariański is summing up his considerations, stating that the younger generation of Poles, in their opinions concerning different attitudes that people have have shifted from rigorous positions towards tolerance or even permissivism.

feel that it would decidedly deteriorate, and 26.5% think that morality would deteriorate somewhat. Those who believe that morality would not deteriorate might suppose that people's behaviour is decided by themselves and not by obedience towards the Church. That doesn't mean that religion has no influence on morality, but that for this half of society the influence is felt through one's personal relationship with God, which again 50% gave as most important position on an 11-point scale of importance in their lives.

V. Closing Comments

The religious changes wrought upon Polish society over the past few years are but one element in a broader process of political, commercial, and social change. The most important tendencies in these changes are related to the process of the deinstitutionalisation of religion. This is particularly clear in two spheres – attitudes towards the Church as an institution and ethical norms propagated by the Church. The fall in public trust in the Church, which embraces the whole range of society and, to an even greater extent, the youth, must be considered one of the most essential elements. Most believers undermine the authority of the Church even in the sphere of religion, not only morality or politics. The overwhelming majority believe that the Church has a lot of power and many would say too much power. Accompanying this is advancing individualism in the area of morality. The respondents declare themselves to be for the right of the individual to resolve moral dilemmas. This is true of society as a whole and, with greater strength, the youth. It may be suggested that these are not ephemeral changes, but, quite the opposite, they show the direction in which religious change will flow in the near future. We may treat them as a reflection of wider changes – in the position of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland on the one hand, and the formation of social consciousness on the other. From the end of World War II to 1989, the Church was, as W. Piwowarski put it, the Church of the People. The Church of the People incorporated integration of the Polish nation, mass consciousness, hierarchy, and expansiveness. Since 1989 the Church has been, in its own opinion, the “Church of Choice,” whose

greatest distinguishing feature is the personal engagement of its faithful in creating a religious society.¹⁴ In the area of changes in social awareness, the most important seems to be the process of objectification, expressing itself in the constant evolution of possibilities to evoke differentiated points of view on a variety of questions – in which, it is important to note – it differs from the official stand of the Church. What is essential and new in this process is that religious self-definition does not require Catholics at this moment to identify with the Church, which was once universal. This is also the source, not so much of the selectivity in accepting dogma and moral norms, which had also occurred in the past, but above all else the undermining of the Church as an absolute authority commanding many areas of life – religion, politics, and education.

In a certain sense we may interpret the ongoing changes as a road leading to balance. Amongst adult respondents the percentage of people designating themselves as “deeply religious” and “religious” fell 7% from 1989. However, declarations of participation in religious practice are on a similar level, although parish priests say that, on the basis of participation by the faithful, a similar fall in practice may have taken place. Perhaps this is the effect of a certain awareness of “precedence,” that is a portion of the respondents assume their current activity in the area of religion to be similar to that of the past when, in fact, certain changes have occurred.

Up to this point, observation does not allow the defense of the thesis that the religious changes in Poland are evolving, at least at this moment evolving quickly, in a manner that may be compared with those changes that have taken place in most Western European societies. Above all else, the growth in belief in life after death, Hell, the Devil, Heaven, and angels stands in opposition to this theory. The low level of acceptance of the dogma

¹⁴ See Piwowarski, W.: *Od Kościoła Ludu do Kościoła wyboru*, (*From the Church of the People to the Church of Choice*) in: I. Borowik, W. Zdaniewicz (eds): *Religia a przemiany społeczne w Polsce (Religion and Social Change in Poland)*, Kraków, NOMOS, 1996, p. 12-13.

of papal infallibility may be seen as an element accompanying the fall in trust in the Church as an institution, not only as an element in religious world view. At the same time, the level of participation in cult practices such as the mass is high, and unrepeated practices such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals remain at a very high level. Everyday prayer is also declared by half the respondents. These are elements that demonstrate that the changes in religiosity in Poland are marching to a different drum and we should probably not expect any violent changes in the rhythm. The process of the privatisation of religion affects, above all else, the area of moral decisions, individual preferences, and the self-realisation of even those values that fall in the area of religion. It need not be against religion as such, especially if the Church finds new forms of unity and rallying the faithful about itself based on a recognition of these changes, that is, on the valuing of the individual and their right to reach their own decisions.

James T. Richardson

NEW RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS*

I. Introduction

This paper will discuss how minority religions, many of which are popularly labeled with the negatively connoted terms of "sects" or "cults," are dealt with by the legal and political systems of selected Central and Eastern European countries. The paper will examine freedom of religion in these societies, especially as that concept applies to smaller and newer faiths. My overall theme is one of concern about the freedom of religion, which is possibly being jeopardised in the context of these post-Communist societies. The concern derives from two sources: (1) efforts of former dominant churches in post-Communist societies to reassert themselves may include actions detrimental to religious freedom for smaller and newer religious groups; (2) Western European societies and institutions, often idealised by

* Versions of this paper have been presented at recent conferences in Poland, Hungary, and Montreal. Appreciation is expressed for comments and assistance offered by conference participants and others.

those in the post-Communist world, have not shown much concern about protecting the rights of participants in new and smaller religious groups. Both concerns require explication, given the apparent rapid development of freedoms of all types in the former Communist areas of Eastern and Central Europe.

II. Rapid Changes

The changes in Central and Eastern Europe in recent years have astounded most observers. The demise of monolithic communism and the resurrection of traditional institutional structures in these societies have afforded a unique opportunity to experiment with the development of considerable individual freedom, including religious freedom in this formerly officially atheistic region. This is occurring in part because of the major role played by religion in the overthrow of Communism in some of those countries, especially for instance, in Poland and in East Germany.¹

Thus, indigenous religious groups from Eastern and Central European societies, especially former "state churches," are rebounding rapidly, with such groups often enjoying support from new political structures. The newly found state support usually includes programs to return property formerly owned by the churches to those churches, as well as allowing the churches' new freedoms of action and societal involvement. Also,

¹ Wood, Janes: *Rising Expectations for Religious Rights in Eastern Europe*, "Journal of Church and State" 33 (1991): 1-15. However, see VARGA, Ivan: *Churches, Politics, and Society in Post-Communist East Central Europe*, on the lack of a role played religion in the overthrow of Communism in Hungary, and on Germany see Hartley, K.: *The Church as a Catalyst in East Germany's Freedom Movement*, and Beckley, R., Chalfant, H. P. and Johnson, D. P.: *Germany's Reconstruction: The Role of the Eastern German Evangelical Church Before and After Reunification*, both in Swatos, W. (ed.): *Politics and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994): 101-118, 145-161, 163-177, respectively.

representatives of both traditional and minority or new religions from the West are flooding into the area, riding the crest of a wave of religion sweeping through these formerly closed societies.² Thus, at first blush it would appear religious freedom is secure in these post-Communist societies.

However, there is cause for some concern for those who would value religious freedom in these Eastern and Central European societies. James Wood has noted that:

...the changes are accompanied by serious problems for religious minorities and for the protection of their religious rights. With the overthrow or repudiation of a government formerly identified with atheistic communism and its repressive and restrictive measures with respect to religion, there is a natural tendency of old national churches to seek restoration of their former positions of power and prestige in the life of the nation...It is this resurgent nationalism which is provoking a new wave of anti-Semitism in much of Eastern Europe that stems from an overly zealous fusion of religion and nationalism. The threat extends not only to Jews, however, but to all other religious minorities...³

² See Poggi, Isotta: *American New Religious Movements in Eastern Europe in the 1990s*, *Syzygy: Journal of Alternative Religion and Culture* 2(1&2), 1993: 7176, for a brief but informative article about the rapid development of activity by some American minority faiths in Eastern Europe. Also see Melton Gordon: *The Evangelical Thrust into Eastern Europe in the 1990s*, *Syzygy: Journal of Religion and Culture* 2(3&4), 1993: 183-192 for a discussion of the efforts of fundamentalist and evangelical groups in this part of the world. Both Poggi and Melton document a huge amount of activity, making it easier to understand why some in Eastern Europe have become concerned about the rapid influx of non-traditional religious groups into the region. Indeed, scholars studying freedom of religion in this area of the world need to take care not to define anti-American sentiment and efforts to protect the cultural heritage of these societies as animosity toward freedom of religion in general.

³ Wood *supra* note 1, p. 14. Also see Babiński, Grzegorz: *Nationalism and Religion in East Central Europe: An Outline of the Problem*, in Borowik, I. and Jabłoński, P. (eds.): *The Future of Religion: East and West* (Nomos Publishing House: Kraków, 1995): 135-146.

The second area of concern mentioned above derives from the understandable tendency in the new political climate for the new Eastern and Central European societies to move toward union with Western Europe, both economically and socially. As this occurs (and it is seriously underway), these post-Communist societies are coming under the influence of Western European culture. The cultural and historical continuity between Western and Eastern and Central Europe, even if interrupted by the development of Communist regimes for several decades, suggests that those who want to understand how the emerging societies of Eastern and Central Europe will develop should look to Western European societies for hints of things to come. Even a cursory review of the reaction of most Western European societies toward new religions reveals considerable animosity toward the new groups, coupled with efforts to exert control over them.⁴

A related reason for concern derives from efforts being made by some Eastern and Central European nations to participate in pan-European institutions such as the European Community and the Council of Europe. This development means that, if successful, these new members of these regional

⁴ On tendencies for Eastern and Central European nations to look to Western Europe see the discussion in Varga *supra* note 1, as well as two provocative papers by Scheppele, Kim: *Imagined Europe*, and *A Constitution as the Convergence of Expectations*, presented at the annual meeting of the Law and Society Association, Glasgow, Scotland, 1996. On how Western European countries have reacted to new religions see Beckford, J.: *Cult Controversies* (London: Tavistock, 1985), and Richardson, James T. and van Driel, B.: *New Religions in Europe: A Comparison of Developments and Reactions in England, France, Germany, and the Netherlands*, in Shupe, A. and Bromley, D. (eds.): *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Preager, 1994): 129-170, as well as other chapters in this volume edited by Shupe and Bromley. The Netherlands is one exception to the general policy of animosity and control in Western European countries, as discussed in the Richardson and van Driel paper cited above, as well as a chapter by Kranenborg, Reender: *The Anti-Cult Movement in The Netherlands: An Unsuccessful Affair*, in the Shupe and Bromley volume cited above. But see a report of a new study of sects underway by the Dutch government mentioned in Simons Marlise: "Europe Scrutinizes Sects: Faith, or False Facades?" *The New York Times*, June 20, 1996.

groupings of nations will immediately come under the legal strictures as well as the normative cultures of those bodies. Again, this does not bode well for minority religions, because the pan-European institutions themselves have a spotty record at best in terms of defending religious freedom for small and new faiths. These pan-European institutions have instead developed a strong pattern of deference toward nation states in the area of religion. Indeed, only once since its inception has the European Court of Human Rights found a violation of Article 9 of its governing document which on its face guarantees freedom of religion, including the right to change one's religion.⁵

The way in which these new pan-European institutions are dealing with new and minority religions should furnish pause for thought, even as we celebrate the opening of Eastern and Central Europe for a more free practice of religion. Freedom of religion for members of minority faiths could end up being limited in the new societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union because of the growing ties with Western European institutions, not in spite of those developing connections.

⁵ See Richardson, James T.: *Minority Religions, Religious Freedom, and the New Pan-European Political and Judicial Institutions*, in: "Journal of Church and State" 37 (1995): 39-59 for a discussion of the treatment of minority faiths by pan-European institutions. Also see Simons *supra* note 4 for a recent reaction to some anti-sect efforts in France and in the European Parliament. The Richardson article reports in detail on the one case where a violation of Article 9 was found, but on a vote of 6 to 4, with some strong dissents. The case – Kokkinakis v. Greece – involved a 77 year old Jehovah's Witness and his wife who attempted to proselytise the local Kantor's wife, resulting in criminal charges being brought against both Mr. Kokkinakis and his wife. Mr Kokkinakis had been charged a number of times before for similar offenses. Both he and his wife were found guilty and fined and sentenced to prison. On appeal to the Crete Court of Appeals charges against Mrs. Kokkinakis were dropped, but those against Mr. Kokkinakis were not, leaving grounds for appeal to the European Commission on Human Rights. Seven years later the European Court of Human Rights ruled that there had been a violation of Article 9.

I will now make brief comments specifically on the situations in Poland and Hungary regarding minority religions, and then offer a sociological interpretation of the changes occurring in these and other Eastern and Central European countries. I will include and discuss reasons for the differences discerned between the positions of minority religions in Poland and Hungary.

III. Developments in Poland

The situation in Poland is quite instructive in terms of the first point made above about attempts by formerly dominant churches to exert themselves, possibly at the cost of freedom of religion for smaller groups.⁶

⁶ On Poland situation see Wood, supra note 1; Morawski, E.: *Civil Religion vs. State Power in Poland*, in Robbins, T. and Robertson, R. (eds.): *Church-State Relations* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987), 221-32; Strassberg, B., *Changes in Religious Culture in Post-War II Poland*, in: "Sociological Analysis" 48 (1988): 342-54; Mucha, J. and Zaba, M.: *Religious Revival or Political Substitution: Polish Roman Catholic Movements After World War II*, and Johnston, Hank: *Religious Nationalism: Six Propositions from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, both in Misztal, B. and Shupe, A. (eds.): *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 67-79; and Daniel, K.: *The Church-State Situation in Poland After the Collapse of Communism*, 1995 Brigham Young University Law Review 1995 (1995): 401-419. Also see Osiatynski, Wiktor: *The Church and State in Poland*, presented at the Church\State Conference, Budapest, June, 1996; Walaszek, Z.: *An Open Issue of Legitimacy: The State and the Church in Poland*. *Annals* 483 (1986): 118-134; Patrick, Michel: *Religion, Communism, and Democracy in Central Europe: The Polish Case*, and Pace, Enzo: *The Crash of the Sacred Canopy in Polish Society*, both in: Swatos, W. (ed.): *Politics and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe* (Westport, Ct: Praeger, 1994); Doktor, Tadeusz: *Present Situation of New Religious Movements in Poland*. Presented at conference on "Minority Religious and Psychopathology," Kraków, 1991, and *Buddhism in Poland*, in Borowik, I. and Jablonski, P. (eds.): *The Future of Religion, East and West*. (Kraków: "Nomos" Publishing House, 1995), 117-126; Łopatka, Adam: *Poland – Return of Religion to Schools (Doubts and Controversies)*, in: "Conscience and Liberty" 3(10) (1991): 10-20; Jazwinski, P.: *Hare Krishna in Poland*, and Libiszowska-Żółtkowska, M.: *Unification Church in Poland*, both presented at conference on *Minority Religions in post-Communist Societies*, Kraków, 1995.

Religion, specifically the Catholic Church, played a major role in the overthrow of Communism in Poland, a development that had repercussions throughout the region. Some commentators give the Catholic Church, both through its actions in Poland and because of the appointment of a Catholic Pope, primary responsibility for the loss of control by Communism in Eastern and Central Europe. Now, however, there are sounds of dissent about strong influence or control being exercised by the Catholic Church in Poland over areas of life which had become secularised (divorce, abortion, religious education in schools, etc.). Recent reports of the conflict over these and related issues cause concern about what protections may be afforded minority religions in Polish society, especially as the interests of the Catholic Church and the political structure may come together in an effort to limit the activities of minority religious groups.

Interviews carried out by the author while on a visit to Poland in December 1995, bear out the fact of difficult times for new and smaller faiths, as does information received since then. One group, The Family (formerly known as the Children of God) was experiencing great difficulty in being allowed to register under new laws that seemed on their face to be responsive to religious freedom concerns.⁷ Governmental officials were not being responsive at all to following the letter of the rather liberal registration law passed in 1989, and were instead showing signs of having been influenced considerably by some who oppose the spread of newer

⁷ The 1989 registration law requires the following in order for a religious organisation to properly register: a list of a minimum of 15 members, who have to be of age and Polish citizens; a list of four "founders" (who can be included in the list of 15); the address of the headquarters of the group; a copy of its creed and its statutes or governing documents; and a history of the group's activities for the past 10 years. More than 100 groups have registered in Poland under the 1989 law, but, as indicated, the bureaucracy now seems to be handling new applications "with all deliberate speed" (the famous phrase from the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case on school desegregation, which has come to mean "very slowly, if at all" in the American context), and my sources indicated that few, if any, groups are currently being allowed to register under the law.

groups within Polish society. This includes the Catholic Church, which has shown signs of being antithetical to new religions as it reasserts itself in this part of the world and seeks to maintain its position elsewhere.⁸ Bureaucrats whose job it is to handle registrations now seem reluctant to follow the law, and are instead apparently “dragging their feet” when it comes to allowing minority religious groups to register.

The government in Poland has also reacted directly against some “new religions,” which it calls “sects,” with the issuance of a report by the National Security Office which this year, for the first time, contained some quite strong language concerning specific groups. Apparently this annual report of the Security Office had not heretofore dealt with NRMs, but recently had a chapter called “Sects and Some Confessions in Poland.” The report cites Catholic sources as saying there are 300 active sects in Poland at this time, located in the bigger cities as well as some of the border areas, which it is claimed, helps with international contacts. The report says these groups are destructive, and that they use “sophisticated and deeply immoral methods and techniques for the purposes of gaining new members, imposing on them stereotypical psychological reactions, controlling their minds, behavior and feelings, and also developing total surrender.” The report goes on to say that some sects engage in taking all the property of new members, some engage in sexual abuse, forcing members to become prostitutes and producing pornography (The Family of Love is named). Some others force members into begging funds for the group (the Hare Krishnas), and some others supposedly include rites that involve hallucinatory drugs. All these activities bring on the “psychological and physical addiction of members,”

⁸ On the Catholic Church reactions to minority faiths in Poland, see Olechnicki, Krzysztof: *The Reactions of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland to the New Age Movement*, in: Borowik, I. and Jabłoński, P. (eds.): *The Future of Religion: East and West* (“Nomos” Publishing, Kraków, 1995): 104-109, and on the general Catholic response to newer religions see Saliba, John: *The Roman Catholic Response to New Religious Movements*, in: Shupe, A. and Bromley, D. (eds.): *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Garland, 1994): 199-219.

and lead to "depression and fears and psychosomatic diseases." One group is accused in the report of kidnapping underage people.

Taken as a whole, sects are, according to the report, using religion as a cover for "financial offenses;" causing an increase in "social pathology" because of the development of communities of "mentally disoriented, drug addicts, criminals;" founding apocalyptic communities which can encourage "suicides and or direct aggression against the outside world." The sects also discourage military service and some engage "in devastating cemeteries and churches belonging to the Roman Catholic Church and other churches." The report closes with brief comments about some specific groups which include accusations that the Unification Church members "are accused of drug selling and trafficking;" that Scientology "is described as a religious mafia;" that The Family involved in "cases of mysterious disappearances and kidnapping of young people in Poland and other countries," and that "everyone who makes contact with them is encouraged to leave their family."

This report then goes on to attack the current law for registration of religious groups in Poland, saying that a group can now register "even if founded by criminals and people with psychological problems." This leads to such applications having "the quality of fraud or other criminal offenses," and "applicants often settle their religious organisations to cover for financial frauds and other crimes." The report then makes a telling reference to what is happening in Western countries, as a justification for a set of recommendations.

This liberal law (Poland's 1989 law) led to some of the groups registering during the past few years in our country that are considered in Western countries as dangerous for the public order and moral tranquility, and whose members are sought in many countries for financial fraud (for example Moon's Unification Church).

The recommendations of the report are (paraphrased):

(1) Establish a department (as in other countries) to analyse and exchange information on religious movements and sects, to work out methods to counteract them and to help the victims;

(2) Accelerate development of a new registration law restricting registration and monitoring activities of groups;

(3) Organize courses for youth about the dangers of sects, and develop interesting ways for youth to spend their free time;

(4) Assist parents in regaining children "taken away by the sects;"

(5) Propagating pro-family patterns (which apparently means to assist families in various ways, making them stronger, which in turn will supposedly cause fewer youth to be interested in sects).

This report reads as if it were written by anti-cult groups from the West, and one cannot help but suspect that anti-cult literature and other such influences contributed to the development of this report. It sounds quite similar in places to the recent report of the French government, which was itself influenced by anti-cult rhetoric.⁹ Thus the Polish report represents a frontal attack on the 1989 registration law, and the groups it has allowed to register, and it serves as a justification to ignore the law as written and to change the law through new legislation. The report is being widely touted in the media by anti-sect forces, and is becoming more well-known.¹⁰

We must wait to see what happens as a result of this report and other activities designed to curtail the work of newer religious groups in Poland.

⁹ See the recent volume developed especially in response to release of what many scholars saw as a very biased report by the French government: Introigne Massimo and Melton, Gordon (eds.): *Pour en Finir Avec Les Sectes: Le debat sur le rapport de la commission parlementaire CESNUR/Di Giovanni*, 1996. This volume contains chapters by a number of U.S. and European scholars, including this author, whose chapter offers a critique of claims that new religions "brainwash" their members.

¹⁰ Note that in Poland as in other countries the controversial religious groups are actually quite small, which raises the question of why the Polish report was included in this year's report of the National Security Office. Cleasson supra note 6 says of the Hare Krishna that there are only about 300 ashram members who live communally, and he estimates the "congregational members at between 1,000 and 5,000. Doktor supra note 6 says that there are only about 1,000 Hare Krishna members in Poland and only a few hundred practitioners of other Eastern faiths in Poland. Libiszowska-Zótkowska supra note 6 says there are only about 400 Unification Church members in Poland now.

But, at this time it appears that the situation in Poland has deteriorated somewhat for minority faiths. They are, according to my information, allowed to proselytise and engage in other activities, at least for the time being, even if not properly registered. But the unregistered groups are not being allowed to fully register with the state and thereby gain the benefits of registration accruing to those groups that are currently registered.¹¹

IV. Developments in Hungary

The case of Hungary is instructive in terms of religious freedom for minority faiths. Wood has written quite positively about a "consultation" that took place in Budapest in May of 1992.¹² His report suggests considerable sophistication about religious freedom issues among participants, which included a number of representatives from Hungary itself. Also, in 1989, a quite liberal law was passed making it easier for new and smaller faiths to register with the government, thus gaining official recognition.

However, in early 1992, a Committee of the Hungarian Parliament proposed legislation that would severely limit several religious groups officially recognized by the State by virtue of their registration under the 1989 law. Four groups which were properly registered were refused financial support from the government in March of 1992, including the Unification Church, the Hare Krishna, Scientology, and the Jehovah's Witnesses. New

¹¹ These benefits include: being able to receive tax free donations of up to 10% of an individual's or company's income; the importation of automobiles and other goods without paying usual customs charges; use of income from businesses operated by the religious group tax free, if spent on activities of the group sanctioned by law; lower cost for insurance for priests and other religious officials, who are also released from military service; being allowed to establish schools; and the possibility of having military chaplains, if the group so desires. Also, simply having a proper registration grants legal status to a group, which has a number of important implications in terms of the group being able to assert itself within legal and governmental forums.

¹² Wood, James: *The Budapest International Consultation on Religious Liberty, Religious Rights, and Ethnic Identity*, in: "Journal of Church and State" 34 (1992): 465-73.

definitions also were proposed to change the law which allowed official registration of religious groups.

In the proposed legislation some basic criteria of having at least 10,000 members or having existed in Hungary for the past 100 years were offered as a way to identify those religions worthy of state sanction and support. The report to the Parliament recommending these rigorous new rules also made some quite derogatory statements about several of the newer religions, calling them "destructive cults."¹³ Those groups named as destructive cults included the four which were refused support: the Unification Church, Scientology, Hare Krishna, and the Jehovah's Witnesses. This legislative proposal became a major topic of discussion among representatives of new religious groups, as well as among the major media and the general public in Hungary.

¹³ Much of this information was garnered during a visit of the author to Hungary in Summer 1993, which allowed discussions with representatives of some of the new religions operating there, as well as with other informed individuals. I have also read scholarly treatments of the issues, and reviewed translated newspaper coverage of these events, as well as reports from some new religions. Some major references used for this discussion of the situation in Hungary include: Tomka, Miklos: *The Sociology of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe*, in: "Social Compass" 41 (1994): 379-392; Tomka, Miklos: *The Changing Role of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe*, in: "Social Compass" 42 (1995): 17-26; Andorka, Rudolf: *Recent Changes in Social Structure, Human Relations, and Values in Hungary*, in: "Social Compass" 42 (1995): 9-16; Tomasi, Luigi: *The New Europe and the Value Orientations of Young People: East-West Comparisons*, in: SWATOS W. (ed.): *Politics and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994):47-64; Varga supra note 1; Kamaras, Istvan: *Devotees of Krishna in Hungary*, and Peter Cleasson, *ISKCON in the Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union*, papers presented at conference on *New Religions in Postcommunist Societies*, Kraków, Poland, December, 1995; Osiatyński, Wiktor: *Rights in the New Constitutions of East Central Europe*, in: "Columbia Human Rights Law Review" 26 (1994): 111-166, ROSS Freda: *The Krishna Movement in Hungary*, in: "Religion, State, & Society" 23 (1995): 207-212, and Luxmoore, Jonathan; Babiuch, Jolanta: *Religious and Secular Impulses Among Hungary's Ex-Marxist Intellectuals*, in: "Religion, State, & Society" 23 (1995):383-396.

The effort to limit the activities of newer religions legislatively was led by a prominent Reformed Church minister, Gáza Nemeth, who attacked several of the new groups in a series of newspaper articles in the autumn of 1991.¹⁴ There were also indications that the effort to redefine acceptable religious groups became an issue on which political parties in Hungary were divided and which had the implicit support of the Catholic Church, thus making the battle quite significant.¹⁵

Reverend Nemeth accused the new religious groups he singled out of "brainwashing" youths, pulling apart families, psychological terror, undercutting Hungarian consciousness among the youth, and other actions he deemed detrimental to Hungarian young people and Hungarian society itself. Reverend Nemeth, with the help of some other ministers, organised a group called "Helping Friend Team," modeled after other anti-cult organisations in the U.S. and Western Europe, especially France. This organisation published in November 1992, a pamphlet called "The Chronicle of the Hungarian Scandal of Cults," making a number of accusations against some groups and calling for the control of the intrusive new groups that had been proselytising openly in Hungary since 1989.

For his trouble, Reverend Nemeth (who later died in 1995) was sued in court by one of the groups he attacked, the Hare Krishnas. The action resulted in a judgment in 1993 against Reverend Nemeth because "...he infringed upon the defendant's rights...with his false statements."¹⁶ This judgment represents a rare event in legal history, that being the successful bringing of an action by a minority religion against a detractor. The outcome

¹⁴ See Kamaras, *supra* note 13.

¹⁵ The Catholic Church has adopted a somewhat critical stance towards the new religions, although Saliba suggests a more balanced view of Catholics. See Saliba *supra* note 8. This general negative stance toward the new religions may be exacerbated somewhat within the context of countries formerly under the dominance of the Soviet Union. As churches which were dominant prior to Soviet occupation attempt to reassert themselves, there may be a tendency to limit competition from groups deemed somewhat questionable by the Church.

¹⁶ See Kamaras *supra* note 13, footnote 9.

of the case suggests that other forces were at work in Hungary, and indeed that seems to be the case.

Political opposition to the attack on the Krishnas developed within Hungary, as a number of people and groups apparently decided that the effort to limit religious expression was a symptom of a larger anti-liberalisation movement developing within Hungary. The Krishna case became a symbolic issue of some import and they garnered a number of unexpected supporters. Significant criticism developed also from outside the country, as well, as a number of people interested in religious freedom from around the world made their opinions known about the proposed legislation by writing letters to leading politicians in Hungary.

A truly remarkable development was the shift that occurred in the media treatment of at least some of the new religions, as the issue of limitations on religious activity implied by the proposed legislation was developed by the media. Kamaras describes in some detail the shift that occurred in coverage of the Hare Krishna, which had received a great deal of media attention since the opening up of Hungarian society in 1989. His careful study shows a pattern of rapidly changing coverage, from predominantly negative in the early 1990s, to quite positive by the mid-1990s. Obviously, such a shift must have represented larger societal forces at work than just the efforts of small religious groups, and thus this episode deserves much more study¹⁷.

¹⁷ See Kamaras supra note 13. There has been considerable research on media treatment of new religions in other societies, including the U.S., the U.K., Australia, and even Russia, revealing a general and pervasive negativity of coverage, with occasional selective changes in a positive direction over time shown, particularly in the U.S. See Van Driel, B. and Richardson, J.T.: *Print Media Coverage of New Religious Movements: A Longitudinal Study*, in: "Journal of Communication" 38 (1988): 37-61, and *Categorization of New Religious Movements in American Print Media*, w: "Sociological Analysis" 49 (1988): 171-183; Beckford, J. and Coles, M.: *British and American Responses to New Religious Movements*, in: "Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester" 70 (1988): 209-224; Selway, D.: *Religion in the Print Media: A Study of the Portrayal of Religion in the Sydney Morning Herald 1978-1988*.

The upshot of all the attention and pressure brought to bear on the Parliament was that the proposed law revising statutes concerning religious registration and support of approved religious groups was not passed. The Hare Krishna were apparently left on the list of approved religious groups and now continue to get some state support for their activities. However, some other formerly approved groups are still not receiving state support.¹⁸ But, there was an outpouring of positive sentiment about religious freedom, including for some specific minority religious groups. Therefore, perhaps Wood's optimistic analysis offered several years ago has been borne out to some extent in Hungary by events of the past few years.¹⁹

Unpublished Honors Thesis, University of Queensland (1989); Borenstein, E.: *Articles of Faith: The Media Response to Maria Devi Khristos*, in: "Religion" 25 (1995): 249-266; Richardson, J.T. and Van Driel, B.: *Journalists' Attitudes Toward New Religious Movements*, forthcoming, in: "Review of Religious Research" (1996); RICHARDSON J.T.: *Media Bias Toward New Religious Movements in Australia*, forthcoming in: "Journal of Contemporary Religion" (1996). The latter article discusses a dramatic shift toward the positive in coverage of one group, The Family, that occurred in Australia in the aftermath of raids on Family homes in which state authorities took over 150 family children into custody, and attempted unsuccessfully to make them wards of the State. It would be interesting to compare what happened there to what happened in Hungary with coverage of the Hare Krishna.

¹⁸ Cleasson *supra* note 13 says that the effort to change the law was abandoned and that ISKCON, as well as other religious minorities, are provided full legal protection and religious and human rights (p. 9). But, apparently the other three groups initially labeled as "destructive cults" are not yet receiving state support for their activities. The Krishna succeeded, according to reports from some on the scene in Hungary, because of a well-organized campaign to inform the public and politicians about their long connection with the Hindu tradition, as well as gaining publicity about their social assistance activities such as feeding the poor. The campaign to gain support for the Krishna is worthy of more detailed study, given its unusually positive outcome.

¹⁹ This episode in Hungary is not unlike what is happening in a number of other countries which were under the control of the former Soviet Union. Indeed, even in Russia itself a major battle has been waged over what is and is not an acceptable religion. This battle, which has seen the open involvement of the Russian Orthodox Church as it attempts to exert itself into the social and political life of Russia, has

The situations in Poland and Hungary seem, at least at this time, to be significantly different, which demands explanation. There is an ironic twist revealed when examining these two cases. Poland, which enjoyed the most religious freedom of any of the Eastern and Central European countries under Communism, now seems to be demonstrating some limitation of religious freedom for minority religions and others not Catholic. Hungary, on the other hand, saw much less apparent influence and activity on the part of religious organisation, such as the Catholic

resulted in a stalemate so far. After passing a rather liberal law concerning religious freedom in 1992, the Russia Parliament, under pressure from Church leadership, passed some quite restrictive new legislation in 1993, only to see President Yeltsin veto the proposal. Alexander Agadjanian suggests, in *Religious Pluralism in Orthodox Russia: Political Controversy and Its Social Background*, in: Borowik, I. and Jabłoński, P. (eds.): *The Future of Religion: East and West* (Kraków: "Nomos" Publishing House, 1995): 157, "This veto suggested that the President preferred a liberal principle over the Parliament's lobbying of the Orthodox priority." Whether this position will hold after the next election in Russia remains to be seen, but it should be noted that a number of cities in Russia are now passing local laws prohibiting any missionary activities within their borders. Thus the Yeltsin veto may be overridden through other methods of exerting control, efforts which are occurring in part because of pressure from the Orthodox Church. There could also be a major shift of policy at the national level (see Hockstader, Lee: *Yeltsin Advisor Blasts Foreign Cultures, Sects*. Washington Post June 28, 1996, A23).

Information on Russia was obtained from scholarly reading and from conversations with several Russia scholars, including especially Marat Shterin and Prof. Anatoly Andreevich Krasikov, the former press secretary for Yeltsin who was involved in the discussions of whether or not to veto the legislation limiting religious freedom in Russia. See especially papers presented at the Church/State Relations Conference held in Budapest in July, 1996 by SHTERIN: "Public Response to New Religions in Russia and the Law on Freedom of Conscience," by Krasikov: "State-Church Relationships in Russia of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," and by Zubov, Andrej: "Ideologisation of Religion and the Confessionalisation of Ideologies in Contemporary Russia."

Church during the Communist period, but now seems to foster more religious freedom, including for some smaller and newer faiths.

Examination of the historical and social forces that relate to freedom for minority religions in these societies reveals a number of factors to be considered. Miklos Tomka, in a thoughtful discussion of the future of the sociology of religion in Eastern and Central Europe, makes several points relevant to understanding what may happen concerning religious minorities in nations in that region.²⁰ He notes that, after reaching a low point in about 1978, religiosity rebounded and became quite visible in the 1980s. He says:

In spite of state control and hampering of church actions, **or perhaps because of them**, grassroot movements, base communities, and autonomous groups reinvented church life and created a counter-culture on the margin of the official Church exactly opposite to the expectations and prescriptions of the Communist state. (emphasis mine)²¹

Tomka expands this intriguing notion as follows:

The expressions of individualism and anti-institutionalism concerning religion are a definite espousal of religious freedom as a human right and a strong opposition to the Church...Religion is and has to be a purely private issue. It is legitimate only as a private matter. It can and should exist in privacy or in small face-to-face communities. Institutionalisation is, supposedly, a degeneration impairing the religious community and an illegitimate interference with social life.

...The marginal situation of sects gave further impetus to the creation of ideologies of a religious existence "outside the world." Such positions were alien to the Catholic and Orthodox religiosity...In short, the concept of privatised religion has theological roots as well, especially in Protestant tradition and the world view of sects. Social experiences in Communism gave support to this idea.²²

²⁰ Tomka supra note 13.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 385.

What Tomka seems to be saying is that Communism forced the development of a form of religiosity that is akin to normal and expected life in smaller communitarian religious groups. This form may be viewed as endemic to societies that were historically deeply religious, but which came to be dominated by Communist governments. Thus, the stage was set for the emergence of such smaller institutional groups once Communism fell, and public acceptance of these expressions of faith should be high because of the valuable functions served by such religious forms during the time of oppressive Communism.²³

In another writing Tomka makes the point that the experience of communist domination may have given the smaller religions a competitive advantage of sorts that could serve them well in the post-Communist era.²⁴

The Communist system devoted less energy to harassing and manipulating the small denominations because of the insignificant number of their members. They were easily able to slip through the net of central control. In this way, they were *assisted by their earlier experiences*. Between the 1950s and the 1990s the numbers of sects trebled in Hungary (references omitted). More important was the fact that without organisation, the big churches were unable to function in accordance with their size.

²³ The President of Hungary, Arpad Goncz, in an opening address to the International Society for the Sociology of Religion which met in Budapest in July, 1993, made a similar point. (GONCZ Arpad: *Opening Address*, in: Social Compass 42 (1995): 7-8.) He said:

...you may...perceive the trends that drive solitary individuals who increasingly feel the weight of their problems and social burdens toward spiritual spheres. They seek, and often find, solace in spirituality, and even more so, in small communities of people that may cure their loneliness. These processes, however, show not only the fact that the churches are regaining their former social role and influence after decades of atheism and tolerated religiousness, but also the role as well as the influence of the traditional churches is being re-evaluated. The attraction of small churches, the so-called sects, is perceptibly on the increase. Nor were people of the region insensitive toward them in earlier times. Poverty and misery may hold the explanation. These sects, the new small churches, were after all, just as poor and excluded as the people themselves and persecuted, to say the least. (p. 7)

²⁴ Tomka *supra* note 13 (1995), p. 22.

Churches with millions of members and those with a few thousands alike lived in their religious families, communities, and congregations. To all appearances, small churches and large became similarly "equal." (emphasis mine)

Varga, in his analysis of post-Communist Hungary, makes a related point: "The only religious organizations that gain strength are the sects and new religious movements,...(which) tend to grow in times of uncertainty and turmoil."²⁵ Thus, in Eastern and Central Europe one might expect a general initial advantage to and positiveness toward minority religions, especially those that had functioned under Communism, but also even imported new groups from the West, in part because of the basic *organizational form and functions* that smaller religious groups usually adopt.

In hindsight it may seem that Tomka's and Varga's remarks are more apropos to most Eastern and Central European countries *except* Poland, a country with a quite visible presence for the Catholic Church, which came to symbolise opposition to Communism. The actions and visibility of the Catholic Church may actually have hindered the development of other smaller religious groups, simply because many Poles could act out their religion and their opposition to Communism through the Catholic channel, in contrast to the situation in most other countries in the region which had seen the more thorough oppression of formerly state churches, thus leading to the situation described by Tomka which was perhaps more conducive to development of smaller religious groups.

Related to this conclusion is the fact that throughout Eastern and Central Europe we might also expect that many citizens would express reservations at bold attempts of former state churches to exert themselves back into the cultural and political life of the society. Efforts to develop religious instruction in public schools, to restrict divorce or abortion, and other forms of clericalisation of society might be expected to engender opposition among many in these societies, in part because such actions seem at odds with the positive view of non-institutional forms of religion that developed under

²⁵ Varga supra note 1, p. 116.

Communism. Strong opposition has developed in Poland and Hungary, for instance, to efforts to make changes granting former state churches a culturally dominant role.²⁶ This opposition to a return to dominance of traditional religious groups seems stronger and more successful in Hungary, in part, according to Varga, because of the loss of credibility of the Hungarian churches which, "succumbed to the pressures exercised by the (Communist) state," leading to a decline in prestige of the churches.²⁷ In Poland the credibility that the Catholic Church earned during the Communist regime, coupled with the fact that a much higher percentage of citizens belong to that formerly dominant Church than is the case elsewhere in the region, means that we would expect the Polish Catholic Church to be a more dominant force than will be the case within other countries in the area.

Another aspect of efforts by former dominant religions to re-exert themselves can be seen in direct efforts to limit the activities, or indeed, the very presence of minority faiths in the emerging democracies of Eastern and Central Europe. Such efforts have been seen in a number of former Communist countries in recent years. Tomka, in writing about problems in the development of a truly objective sociology of religion in Eastern and Central Europe notes, among other problems, the

...clash between weakened churches which suffered under Communist persecution and the emergence of new sects and new religious movements. In particular, the

²⁶ Tomka *supra* note 13, p. 386, recounts that the Department of Sociology issued a press release protesting a plan announced by the Hungarian Secretary of State for Culture and Education to allow optional religious instruction in public schools. He also said that the Department replaced its lecturer in the sociology of religion "for political reasons." The former incumbent was criticised for being committed to the Catholic Church, and was replaced by a "non-believer... fascinated by sect religiosity."

²⁷ Varga *supra* note 1, pp. 112. He says bluntly, "...there is no danger of clericalisation in Hungary." (p. 113). Also see Luxmoore and Babiuch *supra* note 13 for a discussion of the weak nature of Catholic opposition to Communism in Hungary, and the impact this had on Hungarian intellectual life. Also see Ross *supra* note 13 on this issue.

influx of controversial and wealthy sects such as the Reverend Moon's Unification Church or The Family (previously called Children of God) entails cultural and even political conflicts. New forms of street evangelisation by Pentecostal sects and by new religious movements, the growing number of temple-palaces of denominations almost non-existent in Eastern Europe (such as the Mormons) and different techniques of proselytising (such as paid sojourns and even opportunities to study abroad, mostly in the USA, for converts) arouse suspicion and criticism. The growing diversity of denominational structures and the great dissimilarity in membership, stability, and tradition of religious bodies pose questions of equality and freedom of religion as well as of protection of traditional identities and culture.²⁸

Battles over religious freedom in Eastern and Central Europe therefore may take the ironic turn of being fought between ostensible religious entities, with the outcome of such battle varying directly in terms of the position and credibility of the formerly dominant churches under Communism. As this battle develops, there will be a number of interested onlookers. One key type of interested third party is, of course, politicians and the political parties which are competing for position in the emerging societies. Members of this group would be interested, it is assumed, in the long-term well-being of their respective societies, but they would also be interested in any short-term advantage that might be theirs through forming alliances with one side or the other in the conflict over freedom of religion. Also, the general public in these societies has an interest which varies in part according to selected demographic characteristics of those publics.²⁹ And, it is not inconceivable

²⁸ Tomka *supra* note 13, p. 386. But see Andorka, Rudolf, *Recent Changes in Social Structure, Human Relations and Values in Hungary*, in: *Social Compass* 42 (1995): 9-16, who claims that, "the number of followers of new movements is small, amounting to less than one percent of the population." (p. 15) Also see Ross *supra* note 13 for a discussion of the small size of the Hare Krishna in Hungary and how the general public came to believe there were many more Krishna than was the case.

²⁹ A number of scholars have noted, for instance, the greater appeal of newer forms of religiosity among young people. See, for example, Tomasi *supra* note 13, as well as Luxmoore and Babiuch *supra* note 13, at 389. Also, we have already mentioned that the variation in proportion of citizens belonging to the dominant Church is an important variable in explaining developments after the fall of Communism.

that foreign powers are interested in this conflict, as well, and may occasionally attempt to play a role in determining the outcome.³⁰ Thus, the religious entities themselves, while fighting for what they define as their interests, which may include the adoption of a specific definition of religious freedom, may find themselves serving as vehicles for other interests and entities that have agendas vastly different from the promotion of religious freedom, however, defined.³¹

VI. Conclusions

While the points Tomka makes may help understand why minority faiths may prosper in former communist societies, his analysis may not take into account the major differences between Poland and most other countries in the region. In Poland, the Catholic Church seems more able to exert itself into the political and social life of that country because of credibility accrued during the Communist period. This exertion may even include the ability to influence policies concerning freedom of religion for other faiths. In Hungary, which may be more prototypical of the experience of other countries in the region, the formerly dominant Catholic Church is apparently not able, at least to this point, to exert itself with impunity on the issue of activities of minority religions or other matters of social policy. A related fact not to be overlooked, of course, in any sociological analysis, is the number of members of formerly dominant churches. Poland, with its high majority of citizens who are members of the Catholic Church, may simply be acting out Catholic majoritarianism, as efforts are made

³⁰ One can only speculate, of course, but it seems reasonable that the interest of the U.S. in promoting cultural elements such as the idea of religious freedom would play a role in the foreign policy of the U.S., even if that idea may be defined at times as something of a “stalking horse” for other interests.

³¹ See Richardson, James T.: *Minority Religions ('Cults') and the Law: Comparisons of the U.S., Europe, and Australia*, in: “The University of Queensland Law Journal” 18 (1995): 183-207 for a discussion of the contrast between community, group, and individual rights related to religious freedom.

to limit the activities of other faiths. In more pluralistic societies such as Hungary, other approaches to minority faiths (as well as many other matters) may be not only required, but demanded by the presence of significant minorities unwilling to simply follow the lead of the dominant religion.

That reasoning notwithstanding, Tomka's analysis also makes us aware of the great challenges raised by the extremely rapid influx of new religions from the West.³² What we have is a classic clash of values in this former communist region. On the one hand, wide open societies that allowed and even encouraged the development of new religious groups and experiences would seem to represent a maximum amount of religious freedom. New religions that could capitalize, through organisational form or ideas, upon the immediate past history of countries in this region would seem quite able to thrive in such an open environment. But, is there a cost of such openness? Does having a completely free and open religious marketplace have a downside in these newly emerging democracies?

Some would suggest not, and apparently argue for a free and open religious market, using a logic based on an apparent lack of competitiveness

³² Tomka makes another point concerning difficulties in establishing a scientific sociology of religion that has interesting ramifications for the topic of this paper. He notes, *supra* note 13, p. 384, that former communist technocrats are typically uninterested in the development of religion in any form, and they also do not like the scientific study of religion. As former Communists return to political power in these emerging nations, this may mean less religious freedom in general, and less support for the scientific study of religion itself. This could also be the case in the ironic situations that seem to be developing in Poland and Russia where political ties are being fostered between political parties dominated by former Communists and formerly dominant churches. The former Communists may be establishing ties simply out of political expediency, whereas the dominant churches may see such ties as a way to regain a semblance of their status prior to the advent of Communism. But, the upshot of such coalitions could be the limitation of religious freedom for smaller faiths, and a limiting as well of the scientific study of religious phenomena in general.

of the traditional churches.³³ Within the context of former communist countries this position might seem a “blame the victim” argument that fails to recognise the immense trauma that many national churches and other institutions suffered under Communism.³⁴ Nurturing the traditional churches to a reasonable extent should perhaps also be a part of any calculus for religious freedom in these societies. The Polish case is again somewhat anomalous, since the Catholic Church there is so powerful that the rights of minority faiths might be more jeopardised by its actions than in other countries in the region.

Many, including this writer, would favour the maximum religious freedom possible, in part for sociologically and psychologically based reasons.³⁵ However, some recognition of the special circumstances experienced over the past fifty years in former communist countries in Eastern and Central Europe

³³ This could be seen as one implication of articles such as that of Stark, Rodney and Iannaccone, Laurence: *A Supply-Side Interpretation of the 'Secularisation' of Europe*, in: “Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion” 33 (1994): 230-252. Another implication is, of course, that in the long-run, formerly state sponsored churches would be much better off if they were forced to compete with newer religions, simply because they would be required to assume a more aggressive posture in terms of members services and recruitment (either that or they would simply fade away).

³⁴ Some may balk at use of the term “suffered” when referring to major religious organisations that collaborated so openly with the communist regime, as was the case, for instance, in Hungary. However, it seems obvious that no religious groups would cooperate willingly with the communist governments if they could avoid it. One may fault the judgments of religious leaders in those trying times, but from an institutional point of view it seems unreasonable to hold the churches totally responsible for actions taken during those times, and use that as an excuse to preclude them from functioning effectively after the fall of Communism.

³⁵ Some argue that social experimentation fostered by newer religious faiths has served societies well, and that to limit such experimentation will, in the long-run, harm societies. See Hargrove, Barbara: *Social Sources and Consequences of the Brainwashing Controversy*, in: Bromley, David and Richardson, Jones (eds.): *The Brainwashing, Deprogramming Controversy* (Lewis, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1983): 299-308, and Robbins, Thomas and Bromley, David: *Social Experimentation and the Significance*

also argues for the strengthening of traditional churches where needed, if only to help maintain cultural integrity and historical continuity. Some balance must be found between the religious and spiritual needs of people in former communist countries and the efforts of those societies to regain something of the autonomy and independence that was theirs prior to World War II.

of American New Religions, in: *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1992) 4: 1-28. Psychologically based arguments in favor of religious freedom suggest that individual meaning and purpose in life are furnished to many by the newer groups, and that traditional religions cannot, in some circumstances, furnish the meaning desired and needed by human beings, including especially youth. See Kilbourne, Brock and Richardson, James: *Psychotherapy and New Religions in a Pluralistic Society*, in: "American Psychologist" 39 (1984): 237-251 and Richardson, James T.: *Studies in Conversion: Secularization or Re-Enchantment?* in: Hammond, Phillip (ed.): *The Sacred in a Secular Age* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1985): 104-121, *Psychological and Psychiatric Studies of New Religions*, in: Brown, L. B. (ed.): *Advances in the Psychology of Religion* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985): 209-223, and *Clinical and Personality Assessment of Participants in New Religions*, in: "The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion" 5 (1995): 145-170 for reviews of relevant general literature concerning the psychological functions served by new religions.

See Tomasi supra note 13 for a research data on attitudes of youth in some former communist countries that suggest young people may be looking elsewhere than traditional sources for their personal philosophies. Tomasi says, "It is symptomatic that young people, not only those in Eastern European countries, have been the first to demonstrate the eclipse of ideologies by turning toward a less rational but more complex subjectivity." (p. 52) Elsewhere Tomasi says:

Coming now to the world of young people and focusing attention on Eastern European countries, it can be seen that by far the most widespread values are those of freedom and self-realisation. Often the collective behavior of young people, characterised by a pressing need to change, shows itself through the formation of autonomous groups that tend to favor subjectivity. A radical evolution in the choice of values is in progress, and it shows mainly in four ways: detachment from ideologies, a move toward individualism, a growing interest in religion, and trust in Europe, which is seen as the guarantee of the process of democratisation.

Varga supra note 1, p. 115, says, "...the clergy (of the Hungarian Catholic Church) are continuing with methods that do not correspond to the wishes and needs of members of contemporary Hungarian society, especially of the young."

We can only hope that concerns about freedom of religion inform policy development in these emerging societies, and that there is no automatic policy reaction in favor of traditional churches, at the expense of religious freedom for those for whom those institutions do not meet personal needs.³⁶ But, we should hope, as well, that the role of the traditional churches is recognised in these developing democracies in ways that grant them needed religious freedom as well. We also offer the ironic hope that inevitable associations with the new pan-European institutions described herein do not detract from developing sensitivity about freedom of religion in these nations, especially for participants in minority faiths.

³⁶ Andorka *supra* note 23, p 14-15 is quite pessimistic about the role that the traditional Judeo-Christian churches might play in the development of new democracies in Hungary, citing 10 different reasons why the churches are having difficulty addressing the crisis in values and norms that besets post-Communist Hungary. Tomka seems pessimistic also, in his discussion of alternatives available to the traditional churches in Hungary as they face the new world without communist domination. See his comments, *supra* note 13 (1995), pp. 24-25. See as well Varga's somewhat negative assessment of the future of Hungary, *supra* note 1. Hopefully this pessimism of scholars will not be borne out in future events.

Piotr Wiench

NEO-PAGANISM IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The rapid emergence of Neo-Pagan groups in Central and Eastern Europe seems to be a fruitful object of study. It took place in a region where national tensions burst out after the fall of Communism with extreme intensity, following a long period of artificial freeze.

Throughout this article the collective term "Neo-Pagan" has been used, but this does not imply to the purely religious meaning of this word. For the purposes of this study, a broader definition can be proposed: Neo-Paganism is to be understood as a movement inspired by nature-based spirituality, stressing the need to return to ethnic or tribal identity, to pre-Christian roots, to the old customs and indigenous values.

Such groups are emerging throughout Central Eastern Europe with a growing dynamic. What is the reason for the independent and parallel rise of Neo-Paganism throughout the area? It seems that it is neither a fad nor merely a reflection of Western Neo-Pagan ideas. The majority of people interested in Neo-Paganism in Central Eastern Europe do not know the Western Neo-Paganisms. It seems that the answer to the question about the origin of this phenomenon lies in the quest for national identity.

What is the structure and nature of Central Eastern European Neo-Pagan movements? Where do they come from? To understand these phenomena, a closer look at the panorama of the Neo-Pagan movements should be taken. Among the Neo-Pagans in Central Eastern Europe, those in the Baltic countries seem to be most active and best organised. One should take

into account that the Baltic countries were Christianised relatively late in comparison with other European countries. The direct inspiration for the modern attempts to revive Lithuanian Paganism was the tradition of the Baltic holiday of the summer solstice, when people put wreaths on their heads or float them on the rivers. The initiator of Lithuanian Paganism in the modern era was Wilhelm Storosta, called Vydunas, born in 1868. He was a Lithuanian mystic, playwright and philosopher. He was to initiate the celebrations of the "Holiday of the Dew," a Neo-Pagan festival, at the end of the nineteenth century. Vydunas, which means "he who sees clearly" tried to synthesise Theosophy with the Lithuanian pantheist tradition. In the twenties, the celebration of the Holiday of the Dew was continued by Vydunas' followers and the popularity of the festivals grew. It was interrupted by the Soviet invasion of Lithuania. After a long break there were certain signs of revival of this tradition in the sixties. The feast was celebrated then in the city of Kernave.

Some Lithuanians used to celebrate the feast in the territory of the former Pagan Prussians when visiting a former Prussian Pagan sanctuary in Kaliningrad region, a Russian enclave on the Baltic coast.

The Prussian term for sanctuary, *Romove* is present in various contexts referring to the Pagan past. The Lithuanian association for the preservation of indigenous culture, created in 1967, was called "Ramuva." Yet the association was dissolved in 1971 because of accusations of a growing religious involvement in the group. In 1988, Ramuva resumed its activity as the Association for Lithuanian Ethnic Culture. It has groups in five Lithuanian cities. The organisation has a good relationship with Lithuanian environmentalists and sometimes the membership of both movements overlaps. One of the stated Romuva goals is restoration of respect towards nature and establishment of unity of man and nature.

Ramuva also includes a youth organisation and a religious association called Romuva. Its main fields of activity consist of education conceived as the reconstruction and popularisation of Lithuanian folklore, and ritual activity consisting of celebration of old Lithuanian holidays and organisation of yearly summer camps. Ramuva is lead by Jonas Trinkunas, a former

academic at the Lithuanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, later the director of Division of Ethnic Culture of the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Lithuanian Republic. Trinkunas participated in Romuva activities as early as in 1967.

A remarkable trait of Ramuva is their collaboration with the Vilnius Carl Gustav Jung Club. This gives them a certain self-awareness and make it easier for them to understand indigenous myths within the framework of a global culture. The Lithuanian Pagans also admire the works of their emigre compatriot, Maria Gimbutas, an outstanding anthropologist and researcher of the Pagan past of mankind.

An important role in preserving Baltic traditions has been played by Lithuanian and Latvian emigres, who issued periodicals about Baltic Paganism like "Romuva/USA" and "The Sacred Serpent." But now, after the collapse of the Soviet rule, the center of Pagan activity has moved again to the Baltics. A Pagan magazine, "Romuva," appears in Vilnius, creating a centre for the Lithuanian Pagan movement. The co-publishers of the magazine are "Ramuva," the Vydunas Association, and the Prussa Club.

The Prussa Club was created in 1990 and unites people from Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, and Poland who are interested in the heritage of ancient Prussian culture. Revival of old celebrations and rituals are among the stated goals of the association. The Prussa club collaborates with the German Tolkemita Association, founded in 1980, that tries to restore the elements of the extinct Prussian culture.

The interest in Prussian Pagan heritage is spreading in Lithuania. In 1984, a linguist from Kaunas in Lithuania, Letas Palmaitis, and the outstanding Russian specialist in ancient Baltic culture, professor Vladimir Toporov, published an article about the possibility of reviving the dead Prussian language. Toporov is known for his labored multi-volume dictionary of the Prussian language, which has been appearing since 1975. Palmaitis actively popularises culture of ancient Prussia.

An interest in Prussia manifests itself in Latvia as well, where a musical group called "Rasa," or Dew, was created in 1988. Its creator, young musicologist Valdis Muktupavels, defines the goals of the group as popu-

larisation of Prussian language and culture, and preservation of the Latvian cultural heritage and its inclusion in contemporary cultural life. "Rasa" is also a musical group. They play traditional Baltic musical instruments. Through research on the Lithuanian territory adjacent to former Prussia, they try to discern musical patterns that may stem from extinct Prussian folklore. They also sing Lithuanian folk songs that they have translated into the dead Prussian language, as well as Latvian folk songs related to Prussia. Thus they try to become a modern incarnation of the legendary Prussian shamans and singers, the Vaidelotes, whose name stems from the Prussian language.

The search for Prussian legacy is underway in Poland as well. Marek Jagodzinski, a Polish archeologist, discovered in 1982 the remains of Truso, a Prussian village described in the Wulfstam's chronicle 1,100 years ago. Jagodzinski and the Art Gallery "El" in Elblag are going to reconstruct the village in its original shape.

Interest in the Pagan Prussians manifests itself in the Kaliningrad region of Russia too. The Russian inhabitants of this enclave, created on former Prussian territory, are searching for their identity. Some are attracted by the legacy of the German inhabitants of this land, and others are more interested in the ancient Prussian culture. Vadim Chrappa leads a group of people interested in ancient Prussian traditions. He is the author of a proposal for the Centre for the Study of Ancient Prussia, which would be located in Kaliningrad (Koenigsberg).

In Latvia the Pagan traditions are being revived by the Pagan religious association called Dievturi. Dievturi means in Latvian "those who hold God's laws." The movement of Dievturi arose in Latvia in the twenties, founded by Ernest Brastins. Brastins' attempt to restore Paganism was based on Latvian "dainas," ancient Latvian songs imbued with Pagan religion and symbols that describe in detail Pagan beliefs and customs. The dainas have preserved descriptions of the Pagan rituals of solstice and equinox until the present. Dievturi were registered as a religious community in 1926.

After the conquest of the Baltic countries by the USSR, members of Dievturi were acknowledged as dangerous enemies of Soviet rule and

persecuted. They were perceived by the Soviet rulers as Latvian chauvinists, inherently inimical to the ideas of communism and internationalism. Ernest Brastins was executed in Astrakhan in the forties, some of Dievturi went into exile. Those who settled in the U.S.A. have registered their denomination and continued their activity. One of them is Janis Tupesis, a professor at Wisconsin University, who came back to Latvia and was elected to Parliament as a representative of the Peasant Party and later became the Latvian ombudsman.

Dievturi are closely connected to the Latvian independence movement. Olgerts Auns, who coordinates the activity of Dievturi, was for many years a lecturer at a clandestine school of Latvian history and later he was one of the initiators of Latvian folklore festivals, that in the late USSR evolved into huge manifestations of national feelings.

The riddles of the Pagan past arouse interest among Latvian readers, therefore, many books are being published on this subject. The popularity of this topic can be seen as the influence of the Latvian national epic *Lacplesis* (Bear Killer). Lacplesis, a hero of supernatural strength, able to tear a bear to pieces, fights a battle against the forces of evil and the Christian invaders of the country.

A Pagan group in Estonia has been created by the students of the University of Tartu. The group performs rituals led by a shaman, trying to revive the Ugro-Finnish shamanistic tradition. They publish a journal "Hiis" (Sacred wood).

In Belarus, the Pagan movement is represented by Centre of Ethno-cosmology "Krywya" in Minsk. "Krywiches" is a name of a tribe once inhabiting the territory of contemporary northern Belarus. The choice of this name is a result of the research of some Belarus archeologists who contend that the contemporary inhabitants of the country are not descended from the Slavs, but from the Baltic peoples influenced by the Slavs. Much evidence can be found in support of this thesis. The group is inspired by research conducted by an archeology professor from Minsk, Georgiy Shtykhav.

The Centre has created a company, "Werewolf," to cover its expenditures, such as last year's huge international conference on Paganism, and financing the publishing of a quarterly on ethnology and archeology.

In the Ukraine there is a Pagan group called RUNVira, an abbreviation of "Native Ukrainian National faith" (Vira=Faith). This is a highly centralised group concentrated around a charismatic spiritual leader, Lev Sylenko. The centre of the movement is located in the Temple of Mother Ukraine in Spring Glen, New York, U.S.A. Another Ukrainian Neo-Pagan group has been created by a science fiction writer and a long-time prisoner of Stalinist camps, Ales Berdnik.

Like in the Baltic countries, the interest in the Pagan past manifested itself in Poland in the inter-war period. Pagan traditions became inspiration for art. A forerunner of this artistic movement was Marian Wawrzeniecki, creator of numerous graphics devoted to Paganism. The most creative artist interested in Paganism was Stanislaw Szukalski, the son of a blacksmith and emigre from the town of Warta, born in 1893. After a childhood spent in the U.S.A., he was sent by his father to study art in Krakow, Poland. His unique and imaginative style drew much from Pagan and folk tradition. He created a circle of his disciples, known as the Tribe of Haughty Heart. Just before the outbreak of World War II he went back to the U.S.A. and he lived there until his death in 1987. His ashes have been placed, according to his will, at the feet of one of the sculptures on Easter Island.

Similar interests can be found in the paintings and graphics of Zofia Stryjenska. Looking for inspiration in the Polish folklore, she tried to portray Slavic deities and depict traditional festivities.

Interest in Paganism was not limited to the artistic circles. It began to manifest itself in the form of a social movement. The leader of this movement was Jan Stachniuk, born 1905 in Kowel. After completing his university studies in Economics he began to publish books presenting his views on Paganism. In 1937, he founded a Pagan magazine "Zadruga." An interesting trait of Stachniuk's thought is sacralisation of intellectual creativity and the cult of a cosmic energy, which manifests itself in strong will. According to Stachniuk, one cannot obtain prosperity by prayer, and success depends

upon one's own efforts and an active, creative attitude towards one's life. It resembles in some ways a Protestant ethos.

A group of former members of the "Zadruga" group once led by Stachniuk now live in Wrocław and publishes a series of books on Paganism in their own publishing house "Toporzeł." One member of this group is Antoni Wacyk. In his book on Polish philosophy he underscores the personal dimension of the religious experience, which should preclude any forms of demonstrativeness or any mediating role of professional priests between people and the sacred. A Pagan religion, according to him, should concentrate on mystical experience. Wacyk also urges a revision of national history, pointing out that historians tend to glorify losers.

The legacy of "Zadruga" can be also found in the journal "Zywiol" appearing in Warsaw. Its editor, Andrzej Wylotek, belongs to the nationalist brand of Paganism and is active on the political scene as a member of a nationalist party.

Interest in Paganism can be also found among people interested in other spiritual traditions. In 1991 Jacek Dobrowolski, a culturologist and co-creator of the first Buddhist community in Poland, published a poem *Rarog* (saker). The poem refers to the affinity of Polish Paganism with ancient Indo-Iranian beliefs and its main theme is the cult of Jaryla, a Dionysian deity of the eastern and southern Slavs. Dobrowolski is also a keen analyst of Polish Catholicism. In the exuberant cult of the Holy Virgin, Dobrowolski sees a remnant of a Pagan, matriarchical past. He remarks as well, that Polish culture lacks the archetype of a strong, paternalistic male. Dobrowolski traces back the origins of admiration for the losers in the Polish tradition to this fact.

There is also a group *Shri Vidya* led by a yoga teacher, Adam Wojtanek, who tries to synthesise the old Slav cults with the tradition of yoga.

An interesting phenomenon in some of the Pagan movements in Central-Eastern Europe are their close links with environmental movements. This is not only the regional occurrence. This can be attributed to the popularity of so-called Gaia hypothesis, a theory of an American chemist, James Lovelock, popularised in 1979. The essence of this theory is the idea

that the whole Earth is a giant living organism, which is instrumental for creating optimum conditions for continuity of life on the planet. The ideas of Lovelock strongly influenced environmental movements: the perception of the Earth as the living organism results in an attitude of stewardship towards nature, being close to the ancient, Pagan perception of the world or more modern pantheist ideas. It was the triumph of Christianity that, with the exception of the tradition founded by St. Francis, brought about a desacralisation of nature.

There are more examples of the overlapping of environmental and Pagan movements. A Mystery Play of the Summer Solstice has been organised by the Inter-University Environmental Association in Arturowek near Łódź last year. In collaboration with the Museum of Archeology and Ethnography, a scientific seminar on Paganism has been conducted. The event gathered about 500 hundred participants. The "Workshop for All Beings," a group of environmentalists from southern Poland who practice Neo-Pagan rituals in a natural setting, enjoys a growing popularity. A similar group, consisting of students of anthropology, exists in Poznań. They issue a magazine called "Jantar." Similar phenomena of overlapping between Green and Pagan movements can be seen in Lithuania, where there is a close collaboration between Pagans and environmentalists.

The above presented picture of the Pagan movements in Central-Eastern Europe shows one of the directions of the quest for identity in the region, an attempt to find a key to a new situation, to trace back the roots, and explore tradition. These attempts are in no way an escape from reality or sectarian activity. On the contrary, they try to exploit tradition in order to create a new response to contemporary challenges.

After the fall of Communism, when isolation from the external world was broken, the question arose whether the societies of Central-Eastern Europe will become subordinate to Western norms or whether they will assimilate them to their own traditions. The search for Pagan roots is one attempt to answer this question.

What is reason for the sudden emergence of these movements in Central and Eastern Europe?

Partially this can be a reaction to the process of global homogenisation and unification, partially the feeling of religious vacuum and interest in alternative forms of spirituality. Yet Neo-Paganism, unlike Far Eastern religions, is much closer related to the national identity. These groups base their stated or implicit ideology on the concept of return to indigenous traditions. They can claim to stick closer to tradition than even radical nationalist groups. The making of this ideological message seems to be a very interesting phenomenon, as it can bring new quality to the nationalist ideologies and pose a challenge to the taken-for-granted clichés of national identity.

To use Pierre Bourdieu's terms, Neo-Pagan movements – though they don't seem influential at the present stage – are in possession of a vast symbolic capital. This capital hasn't been invested yet.

One should keep in mind the ominous example of the rapid emergence of a social movement exploiting folk mythology and a rhetoric of return to indigenous, tribal roots, which became a powerful political force – the German Nazis.

Social frustration and immaturity of the emerging democratic institutional order in the period of transformation may be conducive to radical nationalism. Can Neo-Paganism become a hotbed of extremist tendencies?

The preliminary study of these phenomena [Piotr Wiench, "Nowi poganie" in *Spoleczenstwo Otwarte* 4/1994] justifies a conclusion that these movements are not necessarily xenophobic or chauvinist by definition. There are different streams among them: from open, multicultural, stressing the need to enrich global culture with local values – mostly active in the academic setting and among the intelligentsia (Latvian Dievturi, Lithuanian Romuva or Belarussian Krywya) – to groups that tend to be militant and exploit popular anti-clericalism and feelings of frustration (the Polish group associated with Boleslaw Tejkowski).

It is noteworthy that among Neo-Pagan groups, associations, and political parties, some strive to influence social and political life – from creating political programs and seeking constituency, to participation of the movement's members in political life (Latvian MP and ombudsman Janis Tupesis)

to the creation of overtly Neo-Pagan political parties (Polish “Social-National Union”).

Another problem of interest are strategies of legitimising the Neo-Pagan movement as the sole guardian of a forgotten, indigenous legacy (in the absence of a continuous Pagan tradition) and delegitimising other nationalist movements, particularly the Christian ones, as being inherently hostile to the very essence of the indigenous culture.

I am going to continue my research and I hope to answer the following questions: what is the potential and dynamics of Neo-Pagan movements? What is their ability to mobilise the frustrated social groups whose interests are being endangered by the new, emerging global economic and cultural order? What is their concept of political and religious leadership? What is the strategy of membership recruitment? Are these movements open or sectarian? What are their political positions and links (if any) to radical nationalist groups?

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN EAST GERMANY

After the breakdown of state socialism in the German Democratic Republic, many observers expected to witness an enormous rapid upswing of new religious movements and sects in the territory of the former GDR. Lutheran Church officials in charge of observing the development of sects and religious ideologies were particularly earnest in their warnings against the dangerous proselytising activities of small religious groups, youth religions and alternative cults. They believed that after the collapse of the ideological pillars of GDR society, East Germans would be particularly susceptible to being drawn into alternative religious groups and communities offering them attractive new support and ideological orientation.

Church officials warned that the disappearance of the state-run social system, which had freed each and every GDR citizen from the burden of worrying about the basic necessities of his or her own existence, would give rise to an intense search for authoritarian solutions, making many people ideal targets for oppressive sects (Gandow 1990: 227).¹ Gandow also believes that as a result of the socio-cultural changes that have been taking place in all areas of life, changes which he says are viewed by the indigenous

¹ Cf. the comments of Hans-Joachim Maaz, the psychologist whose description of the psyche of GDR citizens as psycho-pathological had such a strong effect on the one-sidedness of the western media's view of the attitudes and behavior patterns of the eastern German population: "Many are afraid of freedom. They are therefore looking for solid structures, new constraints and a new leader." ("Der Spiegel" 7/1990. 218).

population not only as a crisis in their ideological world, but also as an upheaval in their moral, political, economic, and professional orientation, and indeed in their life as a whole, East Germans have become so insecure that they are "easy prey" for sects and soul-catchers (Gandow 1990: 221).

In spite of a short phase of curiosity for anything new immediately after the opening of the Wall, and thus interest in the inexpensive or free information distributed by the Church of Scientology, the Krishna movement, or other alternative religious groups, the feared invasion of sects and various other cults of East-Asian inspiration has failed to materialise (Obst 1992: 9; Fincke 1995: 3).

The interest of East Germans in new religious practices is clearly below the level of Western Germany. Scientology and Krishna recruiting evenings are seldom attended by more than eight, ten, or twelve people (Fincke 1993: 317). Sometimes, when the sects organise events, the only people to turn up are the mainstream churches' officials in charge of sects (Barz 1993: 39). Two of the four Hare Krishna groups operating in Eastern Germany – the Leipzig and Weimar groups – have had to close shop for lack of demand; at the moment, only the Dresden and Berlin circles of Krishna supporters hold regular meetings. Several of the temple monks living in Western Germany, who at first had gone to the GDR bursting with enthusiasm to establish a network of Krishna centres there, have – as one of the monks has told me – given up their proselytising work due to their lack of success in the former GDR.

There are a number of other signs of the low level of interest in youth sects, esoteric groups, and the New Age. The five new states in Eastern Germany have a total of only two esoteric bookshops; advertising in esoteric magazines published in German shows that there are almost no events being held in Eastern Germany (Fincke 1993: 317). In spite of what he describes as "highly intensive efforts," Heiner Barz was not able to find people with first-hand experience of occult practices or new-age techniques in the course of his project on "Youth and Religion" (Barz 1993).

When asked about alternative religious practices, however, a relatively large number of Eastern Germans admit having some personal knowledge.

In a survey conducted by the German Lutheran Church in late Autumn 1992 among Lutherans as well as non-affiliated Eastern Germans, approximately one-fourth of those surveyed admitted first-hand experience with religious phenomena such as astrology, cartomancy, palmistry, fortune-telling with pendulums or divining rods, anthroposophy, Zen meditation, yoga, etcetera (Fremde Heimat Kirche 1993: 11). If one subtracts from this number those whose personal experience is limited to astrology, the form of non-Christian religiosity which is best known and popularised by the entertainment media, there is still about 15% who have first-hand knowledge of these types of religious practices. But contrast this to Western Germans — who were also surveyed — they hardly mention more recent alternative religious practices, such as mysticism, spiritism, precious-stone medicine or the New Age: they tend to favour older practices such as astrology, cartomancy, fortune-telling, or miracle cures (ibid.).

These tendencies correspond to the results of a survey conducted in Berlin schools between 1989 and 1991. Not nearly as many pupils from the East admitted involvement in occult practices as in Western schools. While the proportion of the young people surveyed who had tried out one or more of these practices was 12% in Eastern Berlin, in Western Berlin it was about 25% (Zinser 1993: 18). But, although the proportion is much lower in Eastern Germany than in the West, it remains obvious that in spite of the low degree of willingness to participate in alternative religious events and to form alternative religious groups, the degree of personal knowledge of the practices of these groups is relatively high. In other words, a distinction must be made between regular practice, membership, and intensive interaction on the one hand, and casual experience on the other. About one-fourth of Eastern Germans have a certain degree of experience with alternative religious practices, but this experience does not, as a rule, lead to lasting interest or to regular participation.

This assumption is confirmed by an analysis of the basic motives given for participation in occult practices. The first motive stated by the young people surveyed is “curiosity;” the second, “interest in unusual things;” the third “entertainment.” Clearly lower in priority as a motive was “orientation

and decision-making help" (Zinser 1993: 19). In other words, even for those who take part in alternative religious practices, the lack of orientation and insecurity presumed to exist in eastern Germany is not the main reason for this participation. Whether there is a connection between a feeling of crisis and a tendency to turn to occult and para-religious practices or groups is something which would have to be examined in a separate investigation, and cannot be attempted in the framework we are working in for this case.² In any case it is clear that, on the whole, modern alternative religious practices and new religious movements in Eastern Germany have surprisingly little significance.

The question which is to be addressed is evidently why this is so. There are essentially three reasons for the relatively slight importance of alternative religious trends and movements in Eastern Germany.

The first is that openness towards exotic religious practices runs counter to the widespread distaste of Eastern Germans for anything conspicuous, extravagant, too colourful or eccentric, this often described tendency towards mediocrity, normality, and inconspicuousness acquired over the decades of the GDR's history (Woderich 1992). The East German lifestyle was, already in the 1950s and 1960s, characterised by bourgeois values such as hard work, ambition, obedience, orderliness, and cleanliness (cf. Pollack 1993: 89f.). Although things changed somewhat in the course of the 1970s and 1980s (Kühnel 1990; Gensicke 1992: 688f.), a certain lower-class mentality remained one of the most typical features of day-to-day life in the GDR. Many of those who left the GDR in the 1950s and returned to visit after decades of absence had the impression that time in the Eastern part of Germany had stood still. The pressure to conform exerted by the political system gave rise less to character traits such as distinction, showmanship

² Waßner (1991:17) recognises two typical paths which lead to closer contacts with alternative religious groups: resorting to such practices suddenly in personal crisis situations (change of occupation, partnership problems, conflicts with parents) and approaching them slowly as part of a longer lasting process of the seeking alternatives which is often produced by dissatisfaction with the Church.

and self-stylisation, and more to features in harmony with inconspicuous normality. If this is indeed the case, the Eastern Germans' dislike of alternative, strange, and intentionally deviant religious practices could be explained by their tendency to favour normality.

Secondly, the main problems affecting the Eastern German population in the period since 1989 have primarily involved people securing their own material existence. In view of the cognitive, emotional, identificatory, and professional changes, most people have been concerned about professional stability, learning new skills, retraining, reorientation in social, political, and everyday life as well as satisfaction of material needs. People seeking help in mastering this problem did not look to the supernatural: indeed, the majority seem to believe that these are problems which must be solved without recourse to transcendence. In view of people's worries about keeping jobs, ensuring their professional qualifications, fulfilling their consumer wishes and securing their private life circumstances in terms of marriage, family, and relationships, many did not see the question of transcendental values as an issue at all (Weiß 1995). Possibly this is an issue which does not come up until the material conditions of life have been secured (Inglehart 1989: 90 ff.). In any event, the focus of interest of Eastern German society since 1989 has been entry into a performance-oriented society and participation in western affluence, not dropping out of the western market and surplus society. Participation in groups preaching such a drop-out (such as the Hare Krishna movement) is therefore highly unlikely. On the other hand, practices claiming to improve performance and self-confidence, such as transcendental meditation, might prove more appealing. But here too we can assume that the majority see what these practices have to offer as something bizarre and dubious.

And finally, the third reason is the high degree of secularisation in Eastern German society. Over the years, the state policy of secularisation transformed the once almost national religion, the Lutheran Church, which counted over 80% of the population among its members, into a minority church with a membership of just under 25% of the general population (Pollack 1994: 373f.). Many East Germans are so alienated from the

Christian faith that they find religious ideas or concepts – Christian or otherwise – questionable and peculiar. By now, many families have had no ties to any church at all for two generations, and lack religious knowledge of any kind. Alternative religious cults need to address a certain cultural background knowledge about religion in order to be understood. A feeling for the issues being raised by their message must at least be present.

The effect of GDR ideological education has been not so much a close attachment of the majority to the contents of Marxist-Leninist ideology (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 1990: Tab. 9b), but rather a dramatic cultural break with traditions and a strange faith in progress in the sense of Darwinist evolutionism (Terwey 1994: 114; Lutheran Church survey of its members 1992: question 28). This faith is probably enhanced by the orientation of former GDR citizens towards the success model of western societies, an orientation which existed even before the borders were opened. The result, in any case, is a noticeable lack of interest in religious issues and an obvious rationalistic pragmatism (Gensicke 1995). This desensitisation to religion affects both alternative religious groups and traditional churches, indeed, the former more than the latter, as alternative religious movements often somehow depend on the more established church institutions. The road to them is often via a traditional church serving as a socialising agent (Waßner 1991: 25f.). There is often no mutual exclusion between esoteric tendencies and traditional religious socialisation, but rather a complementary relationship (Barz 1994: 25). In this respect, occult and esoteric groups are directly affected by the general loss in importance of the established churches in Eastern Germany.

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THE NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIOSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPIRITUAL REVIVAL OF UKRAINE

Ukraine is now experiencing the third national renaissance in the course of its history. Ukraine's achievement of independence coincided with its entrance into the world of democracy. A new spiritual atmosphere is being created now in all spheres of social life. The country is advancing with extreme speed towards a pluralism of world views. One can observe this most distinctly in the political and religious spheres. The anti-religious one-party system has been replaced by a pluralistic multiparty system which, among others, includes three Christian-Democratic parties.

Religion and its representatives, religious organisations, have now come to the fore as an active force in the spiritual renaissance. Their social status has become more significant. Religion has come to be seen as a decisive element in spiritual culture, as part and parcel of the spirituality of individuality.

The network of religious organisations is growing very quickly. While the number of religious communities functioning in Ukraine in 1990 was about 4,500, in 1995 this number was more than 17,000. In the recent past, only 5% of respondents regarded themselves as believers, this figure now reaches 70%. The number of believers among young people, intelligentsia, males, and the socially active layers of the population has increased.

One can say that the religiosity in Ukraine has attained a mass character. Still, the present growth in the religiosity of the people is not the result of Church activities or missionary work. Above all, it is the consequence of spontaneous spiritual searches and hopes of the people.

The spiritual vacuum formed by the fall of the dominating Communist *Weltanschauung* is gradually being filled by the religious views of the various denominations. While five years ago in the Soviet Ukraine only nine religious denominations were registered by the state institutions, now there are more than 70 different religious movements officially registered and about 110 actually functioning in Ukraine.

As we can see, Ukraine is a multi-denominational country. On its territory together with the traditional and widely spread Orthodoxy there exist other Christian religions — Greek-Catholicism, Roman-Catholicism, and a variety of Protestant communities — as well as Judaism and Islam which are traditional for Ukraine.

Religious movements unknown in Ukraine in the past are now appearing. There are approximately 100 of these movements. Among them there are the Church of Christ, the Unification Church, the New Apostolic Church, the New Evangelic Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, different charismatic and Marian movements, Buddhist movements, Baha'i, Krishna Consciousness, etcetera. Ukrainian Neo-Paganism, in a number of its varieties, is also in a process of renaissance.

The stabilisation of religious life in Ukraine has been achieved. It is demonstrated by the following factors:

- The activities of denominations that were prohibited in the past, such as the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Jehova's Witnesses, the Christians of the Evangelic Faith (Pentecostal), the Adventist-Reformats, the Church Council of Evangelic Christian-Baptists, etcetera, have been resumed;
- Denominations have won the right to conduct their canonical, catechisation and preaching work freely and without obstruction;
- The Local Orthodox Autocephalous Church of the Kiev Patriarchy has been established;

- The cult buildings taken away by the Communist regime for worldly needs are now being given back to the denominational organisations;
- Religious organisations are able to support their connections with centers abroad;
- Denominational organisations are arranging the publishing of theological literature, newspapers, and magazines;
- The religious movements existing in Ukraine are establishing training for priests and a system of religious education and enlightenment;
- The construction of new cult buildings and the repair and restoration of old ones is in the process of improvement, etcetera.

Taking all this into account, of late one often speaks about a religious renaissance in Ukraine. But we cannot agree completely with this assertion. The rehabilitation of religion in public opinion during the years of independence of Ukraine, the changes in public assessment of the role of religion in the processes of spiritual and national renaissance and in the process of forming the Ukrainian state are rather, in our opinion, a result of mass media propagation of religious spirituality. They are images of a desired thing rather than a true reflection of real processes in Church life.

Church life in the Ukraine is characterised by a deep crisis (save perhaps the life of the Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant denominations). This crisis manifests itself in:

- An intensification of inter-Church and intra-denominational clashes;
- A decrease in the influence of traditional religious movements and the aggravation of their financial position;
- The domination of the religious field in Ukraine by the various foreign missions;
- An increase in outer manifestations of religiosity in the absence of a deep and strong faith, with young people exhibiting exotic or pragmatic orientations towards religious phenomena;
- The removal of religion from the processes of national renaissance and even turning it into a disintegrating factor in these processes;
- A failure of religion to execute its role of providing moral imperatives in the everyday life of its believers.

Today Ukraine is in a search of a pivot of social construction that would be able to provide sociopolitical and spiritual oneness for the country. Under these conditions all eyes are fixed on the Church and religion which, until now, had been the only legitimate institution to come forward in opposition to the once-dominant Communist party and communist ideology. The post-totalitarian elite sees in religion an instrument of political and ethnic mobilisation, the means of carrying out those tasks which, properly speaking, lie beyond the religious sphere. Sometimes religious organisations are used in order to achieve political goals or as a factor in national cultural creation.

The materialisation and spread of neo-religious movements has caused alarm in the traditional religious establishment and among the leaders of the state power structures, political parties, and national public institutions. In this materialisation and spread, they feel a strong threat to the culture and spiritual traditions which have been formed over the centuries. There is a clear desire to include their negative attitude towards neo-religions in state legislation. This is why new religious movements enter into the religious life of Ukraine under hostile conditions. This process is still ongoing, though recently it has been characterised in general by extensity rather than intensity.

What are the peculiar features of non-traditional religiosity currently developing in Ukraine?

First, non-traditional religiosity is poly-confessional. There are a large number of neo-Christian movements, both of native and foreign origin, in particular, pro-Russian, neo-Christian formations. Movements of an Oriental nature, adherents of esotericism, and Scientology are also wide-spread. Neo-Paganism is gradually strengthening its position.

Second, non-traditional religiosity is urban, intellectual, and youth-oriented.

Third, neo-religions in Ukraine chiefly attract individuals who were not in the past burdened with a religious tradition and have an intrinsic *weltanschauung* indifference.

Fourth, the spread of non-denominational religiosity in Ukraine, expressed in different forms of mysticism as well as in the creation of different Theosophical unions and clubs, became a typical phenomenon.

What are the determinants of the materialisation and spread of non-traditional religiosity in Ukrainian territory?

We have to be precise in the conceptional apparatus used. In a general set of determining phenomena, one should make a distinction between the condition-determinants and the cause-determinants. The notion of "condition" is generally polysemantic. In our opinion, the conditions should be understood as those phenomena which serve as a ground, as a basic principle, as an opportunity to create something. They exist prior to this something, and as its premise. Together with the causes, they facilitate the materialisation of this something. Although the conditions must correlate with what they cause, the form of the thing caused is not determined by these conditions and, to some extent, is independent of them.

By "cause," we understand those primary factors that interact with the conditions to create a certain phenomenon as their result. Depending on the relationship between the causes and the carrier of the consequences, causes may be divided into inner and outer causes, and necessary and occasional causes.

The condition-determinants of non-traditional religiosity spreading in Ukraine are the following phenomena:

1. The presence of a spiritual vacuum characterises the social consciousness of the Ukrainian people. This vacuum was created in part by the failure of communist ideology and the material dialectic world view, and in part by the estrangement of a significant portion of the population from the autochthonous spiritual tradition;

2. The loss of prestige in the eyes of the people of the activities of the traditional Churches. This prestige was lost, first, by the circumstance that during the time of Soviet power these Churches were branches of the official political establishment, and, second, by the fact that these Churches preserved precisely those dogmatic and ritual forms that the intellectual believer tends to reject and are considered by such a believer to be anachronisms;

3. The destruction of close personal relationships, especially family ties. In an urbanised society, the tight bond between the generations that existed in the past is dissolved and is reflected in the fall in public opinion of its role as a key factor in defining the character of an individual's religiosity;

4. The spiritual denationalisation of a considerable part of the Ukrainian population under the conditions of Socialism. It is this denationalisation that was one of the causes of the loss of a sense of national tradition, of our very own destiny, of the necessity to maintain the link between the generations with the help of the spiritual tradition.

To single out the cause-determinants of non-traditional religiosity is a much more complicated task than to single out the condition-determinants since the former possesses a primarily individual tint. Cause-determinants are revealed on a spiritual level and do not always lend themselves to verbalisation. Neo-religions are not a mere mechanical transportation of religious forms that are native to another country onto Ukrainian territory or a modification of religious forms already existing in Ukraine.

The growth of the role of individualism in all areas of social life, the democratisation of society, and the strengthening of the position of the individual in the full range of his or her rights in society, is reflected also in the world view orientation of that individual. That is why non-traditional religiosity is a manifestation of that complicated anthropological revolution that is taking place now in the content of the religious comprehension of the reality.

A believer who is creatively thinking is not satisfied anymore with religions that are based on ritual splendor and assertions of the sinful nature of Man, with religions that are "working" for the crowd. The irrationalisation, mystification, and personification of religion is taking place. Under the currently complicated and intense conditions of life and its unexpected changes, the individual is striving to achieve peace of mind by means of outside forces, someone's will – God's will or some collective will – to make his or her own individual or family existence more certain.

The religion of the modern believer has become more psychological. This gives him or her an opportunity to perceive God in the form of such real human feelings and ideals as love, goodness, and morality etcetera. At the same time the anthropomorphised interpretation of God no longer suits the modern believer. He is more inclined to perceive Him as Absolute Reason, a kind of spiritual essence, or an objective law. To compensate for this estrangement and impersonality of God is the task of the mediators: the gurus, the religious preachers who, through their activity and attention to each believer, demonstrates or suggests a permanent concern of the Transcendental for an individual person and his needs and hopes.

The neo-religions offer opportunities for people to realise the harmony of the Universe, to find their place in it. With the help of different kinds of meditation they show the way for everyone to reach a mystical experience, to understand the innermost spheres of one's consciousness.

The characteristics mentioned above concerning the neo-religious process are manifested in their fullest form among the carriers of East-Asian religiosity.

The East-Asian religions are a relatively new phenomenon for Ukraine. For a long time, traditionally Christian Ukraine was not acquainted with religions other than Orthodoxy. The non-Christian religions generally had no support in society, were taken as inadmissible free-thinking, as a challenge to the established traditions, so they were condemned. Having appeared in Ukraine in the 1980s as a part of worldwide modern religious processes, these movements of Eastern origin are now represented here by the neo-Hinduism, Buddhism, and separate movements of the Chinese and Japanese traditions. Among the total number of religious organisations registered by January 1, 1995, groups of Eastern origin amounted to 0.33%.

Among 52 communities of East Asian orientation, the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, Osho Rajneesh, Sai-Baba, Sri Chinmoy Centers, the "Light of the Soul" Mission, the International Society "The World Pure Religion" (sahaji), the Transcendental Meditation Centre, neo-Hindu in their nature, are most numerous.

Today neo-Hinduism is an inseparable element of religious life not only in India, but also in many countries in America and Europe. Choosing the ancient Vedic culture as their basis, making the best use of the values of other religions, of the cultural historical achievements of the Ukrainian people, of the affinity of the ancient Ukrainians with pre-Hindu Aryans and even their genetic unity, these neo-Hindu movements are becoming more and more popular in Ukraine.

All of the movements in neo-Hinduism declare themselves to be following in the footsteps of disciples from the common spiritual Hindu tradition – the basic principles of which are the principle of monism, unity in variety, absence of conflict between the spiritual and material, worldly and divine existence. Of all the neo-Hindu teachings, the ideas of universality, syncretism, and the equality of all religions as paths to God as the spiritual basis in the reconstruction of the society are popular. The presence of the guru as an advocate of the teaching and as a guide in the spiritual searches of the individual, group, and movement is obligatory. The neo-Hindu movements that have adjusted to the modern personality have been by Eastern missionaries in an extremely active way since the middle of the twentieth century, mainly in the form of cultural, educational, and sanitation measures.

The 22 Buddhist communities registered in Ukraine are related primarily to neo-Buddhism. The latter appeared in Japan as early as the first half of the last century but was only practiced on a large scale in Japan, the U.S.A., and Western Europe only after World War II. It is characteristic for the neo-Buddhist movements to put their emphasis on one or a selection of several features of the Buddhist teachings. Each of them lays claim to the orthodox interpretation of the Buddha's teaching and to unite the divergent ideas of different traditions, even of Christianity, in their religious systems.

The largest group of movements in neo-Buddhism is composed of those communities whose dogmas are connected with one of most widely spread (together with the Zen Buddhism) modern schools of Japanese Buddhism, Nichiren, named after the thirteenth century teacher of the Lotus Sutra. This school is represented in Japan, Russia, Ukraine, and other countries by

monks from the Nipponzan Myohoji order that appeared in 1917 on the initiative of Nichidatsu Fujii (1885-1985) – the leader of Japanese Buddhism in the twentieth century. Pacifistic belief and activity are the characteristics of this order. Since the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Buddhist communities of this school have appeared in Kiev, Donetsk, Kharkov, and other cities of Ukraine thanks to the Buddhist monk, Terasavi Junsei. They conduct intense peace-making activities, anti-military actions, peace marches, etcetera.

The followers of the movements and groups mentioned above became the object of attention of a short-term scientific research group created at the “Kiev-Mogila Academy” University in 1995.

As a result of the sociological investigations performed, it was shown that the followers of the Eastern religions represent all age groups. It is not correct to consider the expansion of non-traditional religiosity to be exclusively a youth phenomenon. We can speak only about the predominance of young people in the group of these believers. Young people aged from 20-29 make up about half of all the followers of Orientalism. Among the members of the Hare Krishna movement this age group makes up 47.5%, among Buddhists – 69.0%. The next largest group is the 30-39 year olds: among Hare Krishna – 35%, among Buddhists – 14.3%. The Baha’i community is the most homogeneous in age distribution.

The results of the investigation disproved the existing opinion about the prevalence of Russians among followers of Orientalism. The respondents are distributed according to nationality in the following way: among Hare Krishna followers Ukrainians represent 37.5%, Russians – 47.5%, others – 12.5%. Among Buddhists, Ukrainians represent 50%, Russians – 40.5%, others – 7.1%. A certain number of respondents gave no answer as to their nationality showing that this factor is not essential in their system of values.

The level of education of the East-Asian religion followers is also high, especially among Baha’i followers – 82% with higher education. Among Buddhists, 52.4% of the respondents have secondary and higher education, half of the respondents being students. Among Hare Krishna followers, only 37.5% of the respondents have secondary and higher education. Only a very

small number of members in East-Asian communities have not finished their secondary education and, as a rule, these are currently high school pupils.

The picture of the professional occupations of the carriers of the East Asian religiosity turned out to be unexpectedly diverse, so it was impossible to demonstrate a prevailing area of occupations. The followers are primarily intellectuals (students, teachers, scholars, engineers, physicians, painters, culture workers, etc.). Workers are represented only among the members of the Buddhist communities – 7%. Among the respondents there are only a few for whom religion became a professional sphere of activity.

Having chosen one of the Eastern traditions, the followers of Orientalism were eager to clarify the reasons (motives) for their choice. Among these reasons they mentioned the imperfections and obsolescence of the dogmas of the traditional Churches, the unnatural splendor of Church cult, the stingy behaviour of the priests, etcetera.

Still, modern non-traditional religiosity is not based on the disadvantages of the traditional religions, but on the advantages of the religions chosen. Among the attractive features of the religions chosen the devotees declare universality, the perfection and humanism of Buddhism, “the persuasion of Vedic writings, the life-style and personal qualities of Krishna devotees, the surrender to the laws of the Lord.” A positive feature of Buddhism is the perception that it is not a religion: Buddhism is a philosophy and psychology of life, a method and meaning of life, a science of liberating oneself from suffering, it is not faith, but knowledge subject to verification.

The search for truth was a prevailing motivation for the adherents of new religions (39.6%). The next reason was the aspiration to self-knowledge, self-perfection, and self-manifestation (16.1%). A spiritual search was the starting point for 76.2% of Buddhists and 75% of Hare Krishna followers.

These reasons are expressed in the motivations for their religiosity. These motives always contain some emotional, cognitive, and volitional impulses. The manifold character of the life-activity of a person is expressed by this person through making one's way of thinking and behaviour dependent upon a number of motives. For the followers of neo-religions,

faith offers an opportunity for spiritual perfection (63.8% of all respondents), creates the idea of God (54.4%), or a human being (50.3%), of the world (49.7%), serves as a moral imperative (41.6%), offers an opportunity to feel connection with God (44.6%), to take part in social activity (37.2%), and to find the answers to all the soul-stirring questions of life (61.7%).

As a rule, the choice of a non-traditional religion causes radical changes in the life of more than 70% of the believers. An unusually high number of those who became conscious of the changes in their lives are found among the ISKCON (Hare Krishna) followers. According to the figures given by the believers themselves, 85% of Krishna devotees, and 66% of Buddhists have experienced a change in their attitude towards the world and other people. In the sphere of family relations and professional occupation there are also some less fundamental changes.

Having come across cases of conflicts between the parents and children, we tried to determine the level of tolerance both from the side of the near environment (the family) and the far environment (the neighbors) towards the believer. Contrary to public opinion that considers the new religions as a decisive factor leading to family conflicts and tragedies, it turned out that the portion of those who negatively regard the religious choice of their relatives is insignificant; at most, 8.1%.

The majority of the respondents show solidarity in their answers to questions concerning their attitude towards the variety of religions and beliefs. Of the respondents, 78.5% recognise the equal right to existence for all religions. None of the followers of ISKCON or Buddhism considers their own religion to be the only genuine one.

Besides the inner factors of the spread of neo-religious movements there are also outer factors, among them:

- A general orientational crisis in Eurocentric civilization that leads to a synthesis of Western and Eastern religious movements and intensifies religious “experiments” in general;
- A search for universally meaningful values in the face of spiritual crisis, of ideological key factors that will balance the social existence of the human being;

- Spiritual intervention by various foreign religiously oriented missions which, in their search for new territories for proselytisation, have felt that the spirituality of the Ukrainian people is unprotected from outer ideological influences and that the historical Churches are not capable of functioning in a democratic society;
- The effort and skill of neo-religious movements, with their solid financial and organisational capacities, to satisfy the everyday needs of the people, even the needs of young people to get direct knowledge of the Western world, to master a trade, or to learn foreign languages, etcetera.

One can also add other outer motives favoring the spread of non-traditional religiosity which possess, in general, the character of a necessity and cover a wide segment of the population. As to the particular denominational identification on an individual level or on the level of territorial expansion, it is mainly determined by accidental factors: the activity of some particular religious mission or preacher and their meeting with a particular person; the acquaintance of a person with the theological writings of a particular denomination and a lack of information about the dogmas of other denominations; the receiving of beneficial help from a particular religious group and an aspiration to understand the content of its dogmas; an opportunity offered by a particular foreign mission to visit a foreign country with the aim of getting acquainted with this country or to study there, etcetera.

The choice of a religion is an extremely complicated and long process. It implies the presence of spiritual and denominational alternatives. The accidental choice of a neo-religious movement causes instability of the non-traditional religion in the spiritual world of a person and creates the possibility of a quick change of this religion and even a transition to the position of religious free-thinking.

What are the prospects of neo-religions in Ukraine?

The process of their growth in Ukraine has already come to a point of stabilisation. This suggests that their future existence will be as religious minorities. Our conclusion is based on the following theses:

— First, the implementation of missionary activity on the part of the traditional churches, their mastering the mass-media, the rallying of public opinion to perceive the traditional Churches as the “religion of the ancestors” will tend to narrow the field for the irresistible expansion of neo-religions;

— Second, the formation of the Ukrainian state on the principles of national ideas will create an image of neo-religions as alien elements in Ukrainian society;

— Third, the failure of non-traditional religions to completely satisfy the pragmatic hopes of all their followers will lead not only to a decrease in interest in these religions, but also to a decrease in the number of followers;

— Fourth, the spread of neo-religions will be hindered in every way possible by the state which has not yet given up the idea of the consolidation of the Ukrainian people around one of the traditional Churches.

The coexistence of the traditional and non-traditional religious movements will provide real democracy in our country. It is only in this way that Ukraine will find the gates that lead to the world community wide open for itself.

Przemysław S. Jazwiński

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISKCON IN POLAND SINCE THE MID-70s

I. Introduction

New Religious Movements (NRM) are one of the new phenomena in Eastern European societies which have been going through a phase of deep social and economical transformation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In Poland the number of NRMs has been growing rapidly after the downfall of Communism and the opening of the borders in 1989. As the new, liberal law enabled easy registration, setting the limit of 15 members for the new groups, about 100 NRMs became legally established in Poland. Soon controversies around NRMs began to arise in the media and consequently in society in general. A number of anti-cult centers were founded to stop the expansion of NRMs. Despite the controversies surrounding NRMs, neither scholars nor members of the general public in these countries know much about NRMs in general. ISKCON, or the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, one of the most popular and well-known NRMs, is no exception in this regard. Little academic literature concerning ISKCON in Eastern and Central Europe is available. Very few studies have been done so far. This paper is an attempt to provide some basic information on ISKCON in Poland, its development and activities.

Founded in 1966 by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in New York, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has since established itself as a worldwide confederation of devotees of Krishna. Better known

as the Hare Krishna movement, ISKCON is comprised of about 350 temples, 40 rural communities, 50 schools, and 95 restaurants in more than 100 countries. Being a part of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, ISKCON follows the medieval Indian saint and religious reformer, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, whose message has been transferred to the present-day by a chain of successions (parampara). Bhaktivedanta Swami translated more than 70 volumes of Gaudiya Vaishnava scripture into English, thus establishing a foundation for the development of the ISKCON mission. ISKCON grew rapidly in the USA in the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1969 ISKCON came to England and from there to the continent in 1970. By his tireless traveling and preaching during the last ten years of his life, Bhaktivedanta Swami succeeded in developing his movement on six continents. ISKCON became gradually accepted in India as an authentic branch of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. After a difficult decade following Srila Prabhupada's departure in 1977, ISKCON gained momentum and is developing and spreading in a number of regions, including Eastern Europe. Initially a strictly monastic movement, ISKCON has been gradually turning into a congregational religious institution. At the present moment there are about 30,000 initiated members and the congregation is estimated at about one million followers, many of them in India. Initiated members follow the four principles of (1) vegetarianism, (2) no intoxication, (3) no illicit sex, and (4) no gambling. The ultimate authority in ISKCON is a board consisting of senior members, called the Governing Body Commission.

II. Outline of the Development of ISKCON in Poland from the Mid-70s to 1995

The beginnings of ISKCON in Poland date back to 1976 when the first disciples of the founder, Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, started to visit countries behind the "Iron Curtain." Kirtiraja das, an American from a Polish family, initiated by Prabhupada in 1972, was the first Hare Krishna devotee to visit Poland in 1976. He stayed with his wife, Hari Puja devi dasi, at the flat of an academic in Lublin. Seeing the great interest in Eastern spirituality

among Poles, he later encouraged his Godbrothers to continue visiting Poland and preaching the ancient Indian teachings represented by ISKCON. After a few futile attempts, German devotees managed to get visas in Frankfurt and crossed the Polish border, to reach the Polish sanctuary in Częstochowa, where an annual, informal, hippie festival took place. Unusually dressed, in colorful robes and with shaven heads, they became a great attraction for the crowds of young people. They would give out free vegetarian meals and records with the Hare Krishna maha-mantra recorded by the Beatle, George Harrison. Among the attendants of the festival there was a half-apostle, half-hippie, Jerzy Przychodzień, a well-known figure among the dissidents of that time. He gave up his monastic vows and became a vagabond preacher. Enchanted by the oriental philosophy of the western Krishna's, he decided to cease his former life and become one of them. Due to his endeavors, more disciples of Srila Prabhupada began to visit Poland, staying usually at the flat of this first Polish devotee of Krishna in Wrocław, where lectures and discussions with guests would take place.

The turning point for the beginning of Polish Krishna consciousness was the arrival of one of the closest disciples of Srila Prabhupada, Harikeśa Swami, who initiated Jerzy Przychodzień as his disciple, giving him the name: "Uttama das." Other disciples of Srila Prabhupada, among them, Hridayananda das Gosvami, a prominent scholar, met with a group of Warsaw artists and dissidents in a popular painting atelier in the Old Town. Soon some of them started to take up the practices of Krishna consciousness and a small group of them were initiated by Harikeśa Swami during his visit to Czechoslovakia. At the end of 1979, a division started to emerge between the Warsaw centre, headed by Kulapavana dasa and Wrocław group, directed by Uttama. Right before the declaration of martial law in 1981, a few buildings were bought in the village of Czarnów in the Sudety mountains, close to the property of one of the female devotees. This became the farm community called by the followers "New śāntipur."

The limitations on civil rights introduced on December 13, 1981, made the condition of Hare Krishna community life worse and checked their missionary work as well. Their primary source of maintenance at that time

was distributing Swami Prabhupada's books, mainly the Bhagavad Gita and Sri Isopanishad, an activity which was frowned upon by the Polish authorities. This led to permanent problems with police, often ending in short, 48-hour arrests. A major problem was also food, limited by the rules of Krishna consciousness to a vegetarian diet, difficult to achieve in times of a coupon market and empty shops. Despite the "night of marital state," new members joined and met in a ruined flat in the centre of Warsaw. Members who joined at that time brought with them a more intellectual attitude towards ISKCON philosophy.

In the middle eighties devotees of Krishna, answering to the public interest in Eastern spirituality, started to organise cultural programs in students' hostels under the cover of the student group "Weda." They were well attended and attracted many students. A popular place was another "farm," situated in the small village of Ostrowy, twenty kilometers from Kutno (central Poland), called the "New Ramakeli," situated on the property of two devotee-brothers' grandfather.

The lifestyle of Hare Krishna members first aroused pity, laughter, and scorn, but it soon turned into respect, especially as youth from the capital started to visit the place every Sunday. They wanted to experiment with the exotic way of life of the recluse and some of them declared their desire to stay there and follow the stages of the Krishna consciousness process to the rhythm of the Hare Krishna mantra. For those who were tied to Warsaw, due to their work, studies, or missionary activities, there was another place, a house called "Shrivasaṅga" in Milanówek, in the vicinity of Warsaw. The centre, placed on the outskirts of the town, was of a monastic and closed character partly due to fear of the secret police.

A landmark in ISKCON's history was the formal registration of the movement as an "association" under the name "Society for Krishna Consciousness – Bhakti Yoga in PRL," conducted at the governmental Department of Religious Affairs in June 1988. It gave a legal basis for their missionary activities and invitations to ISKCON leaders from the West. It was not, however, fully satisfying; ISKCON was not registered as a religious group.

One of the first signs of this freedom was the visit of Harikeśa Swami in June and July 1989. His visit was celebrated during a three-day festival that attracted hundreds of guests, even from abroad (Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia) to prestigious student clubs in Warsaw. For the first time in Eastern Europe a big "harinama," a procession with singing and playing Indian instruments, took place on the Old Town Central Square. At that time the Warsaw centre became the centre of Polish "Bhakti Yoga." The building in Milanówek, due to its incompatibility with the new, pluralistic reality of social life in Poland, was sold at the end of 1988. Hare Krishna devotees moved to a house rented from a famous sportsman in the nearby Józefów. This place hosted many of the disciples of Srila Prabhupada coming to Poland from Western Europe, U.S.A. and India. Also weekly Sunday feasts, initiated by Srila Prabhupada at the beginnings of ISKCON in the 1960s, were, for the first time in Poland, started there. At the end of 1989, with the help of their western Godbrothers, Polish ISKCON followers purchased some devastated property and a park in an agricultural area of Mysiadło, near Warsaw. Hare Krishna monks moved there after redecorating buildings and started their missionary activities from this new place. At the same time, apart from the farm in Czarnów, the Wrocław temple flourished, as the third main centre of Krishna consciousness in Poland. In all three centers the main missionary activity remained book distribution.

Polish ISKCON was fully accepted as a religious organisation under its original name, translated into Polish, and registered as the thirtieth church by the governmental Office of Religious Affairs on January 31, 1991. This act allowed further development of ISKCON in Poland by defining its rights and obligations towards the state. Based on this regulation, two more temples were registered in 1992. The first one was founded in Krakow, headed by Trivikrama Swami, one of the first disciples of Srila Prabhupada, initiated in 1968, and the second in Gdańsk. Apart from these five temples of ISKCON in Poland there is one more, exceptional for the whole of ISKCON, a traveling festival temple, headed by Indrayumna Swami, a well-known ISKCON guru and musician.

The turning point for Polish ISKCON was its formal registration as a society in 1988, and as a religious organisation in 1991. It allowed an open development and practice of Krishna consciousness for the growing community of followers. A number of programs, including the Food For Life program, book distribution and festivals of Krishna consciousness started to flourish. At the same time, the opening of borders opened Polish ISKCON to Western experiences. It gave a more mature and less dogmatic vision of the movement and opened ISKCON to society at large. The “thera andus” consciousness, common at the time of the underground activities, began to disappear, as more senior disciples of Srila Prabhupada started to visit and even stay permanently in Poland. At that time ISKCON membership started to develop rapidly, which is described in the next section.

III. ISKCON Poland in Numbers

The statute of the Society from 1991 (with later amendments in 1995) regulates the activities of this religious group in Poland. The Society as a whole has a legal status, as do individual temples, territorial units, publishing houses, schools, and institutes. ISKCON in Poland is headed by the National Council, consisting of a GBC representative (at the time of writing Suhotra Swami), temple presidents and other members, who are appointed by the Council to take the responsibility for particular areas of the mission, such as book distribution or the Hare Krishna Food For Life program, ISKCON's charity. Directors of other legal entities are also appointed by the Council. As mentioned before, there are five stationary temples, in Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, Gdańsk and the farm in Czarnów, and the traveling temple, which changes its base of operations at different times of the year. Temples are centers for the congregation of devotees living outside of the temple as well as ashrams, or places of spiritual education for celibate students who live inside the temples. The biggest number of initiated members live in Warsaw – 80 initiates, including the temple. In other major centers the numbers of initiated members are: Kraków: 68, Wrocław: 65, Czarnów: 33, Gdańsk: 26, and INTF (Laxmi Nrsimha Travelling Festiva): 37.

These figures should be taken as changing, as many members change their temples, in some cases one can speak of a nomadic lifestyle. For most of its history in Poland, ISKCON has not collected any strict statistics regarding its members, their social status, education, professions, etcetera, partly due to the fluctuation of membership, especially in the first stages of development, and also due to the political and social situation, and rising fear of investigation. Only in the last two years have such studies been started by the ISKCON Communication Office in Poland; however, they are still far from being completed and published. I will try to present the data that is already known and which can give an idea of Polish ISKCON parameters. Each stationary ISKCON temple has a zone. The following voivodships belong to each temple:

Warsaw Temple (which is also the main seat of the Society): Warsaw, Skierniewice, Łódź, Płock, Ciechanów, Ostrołęka, Łomża, Białystok, Siedlce, Biała Podlaska, Radom, Lublin, Chełm.

Kraków: Kraków, Kielce, Tarnobrzeg, Zamosć, Przemyśl, Rzeszów, Tarnów, Nowy Sącz, Krosno.

Wrocław: Wrocław, Legnica, Leszno, Poznań, Piła, Bydgoszcz, Toruń, Włocławek, Konin, Kalisz, Opole, Sieradz.

Czarnów: Wałbrzych, Jelenia Góra, Zielona Góra, Gorzów, Szczecin, Bielsko Biała, Katowice, Częstochowa, Piotrków Trybunalski.

Gdańsk: Gdańsk, Koszalin, Słupsk, Elbląg, Olsztyn, Suwałki.

The travelling temple has its seat in Łódź, but being active in the whole area of Poland, does not have a separate administrative zone. Altogether, there are 443 initiated members with the first initiation (46% are women, 54% men), including 160 members with the second, Brahman initiation (43% are women and 57% are men).¹

The data above shows the rapid growth of ISKCON in Poland after 1988, that is, since the legal recognition of the movement. Of its initiated members, 88.7% were initiated after 1988. The number of temple inhabitants is estimated at about 300 members, both initiated and preparing for initiation.

¹ These data are the most actual and they were collected to the of August 10, 1997.

Table 1

The Percentage of Initiations in the Years 1978-97

	1st initiation		2nd initiation	
	%	no	%	no
1978	0.2	1	0.0	
1979	0.2	1	0.6	1
1980	0.9	4	1.3	2
1981	0.0	0	1.3	2
1982	0.7	3	0.0	0
1983	0.5	2	1.3	2
1984	1.1	5	0.6	1
1985	0.9	4	1.3	2
1986	1.4	6	0.0	0
1987	0.0	0	0.0	0
1988	2.5	11	3.8	6
1989	2.0	9	5.0	8
1990	6.3	28	2.5	4
1991	10.3	45	5.0	8
1992	6.8	30	15.0	24
1993	10.8	48	10.6	17
1994	9.3	41	12.5	20
1995	19.0	84	10.6	17
1996	19.2	65	28.8	38
1997	8.1	36	5.0	8
Total	100.1	443	100.2	160

Depending on the criteria of membership, the number of followers of Krishna consciousness may vary from about 1,000 active followers, engaged in missionary activities, to about 5,000, if less regular visitors to temples and centers are counted as followers. The Wrocław Temple issues a quarterly for its congregation and the Communication Office in Gdańsk publishes a monthly magazine "Yatra's Life," and a quarterly publication for media called "Hare Krishna in Poland."

IV. Outline of the main Activities of ISKCON Poland

Charitable program – Hare Krishna Food For Life

ISKCON has developed the biggest vegetarian food relief program called Hare Krishna Food For Life. Its volunteers in more than 60 countries

have distributed about 70 million plates of free, nutritious prasadam (sanctified food). In May 1997, the Hare Krishna Food For Life program celebrated its two millionth plate distributed in Poland. The first Polish Food for Life programs were started in Warsaw and Gdańsk three years earlier. Initially, distribution usually took place on the streets. Gradually more professional means of reaching the needy were developed, for instance bringing meals to schools and social security centers, as well as cooperating with non-governmental organisations. Four ISKCON temples and centres (Warsaw, Wrocław, Lublin, and Leszno) distribute 6,000 free meals every week. This program, carried out by about 100 Krishna devotees, has attracted much social interest and sympathy for ISKCON, and this charitable program has become the most public of all ISKCON activities in Poland.

Public programs

One of the main activities of ISKCON is public programs aimed at presenting Krishna consciousness to outsiders. Programs are usually organised at student clubs and culture clubs, due to the lack of a sufficient number of temples and their small size. The best known public programs are organised by the travelling temple, which is especially known for its summer tour along the Baltic coast. For the last seven years, this group of about 300 Hare Krishna devotees has been performing their programs for a few thousand onlookers each time, on open stages and at the seaside. These programs present traditional Bengali music (bhajan), puppet theater, depict scenes from Ramayana or from other Vedic scriptures, short lectures on philosophy, vegetarian feasts, and rock concerts. During other parts of the year, the travelling temple presents (LNTF) similar festivals in other parts of Poland.

Distributing religious literature

Many ISKCON members, both men and women, distribute books written by the founder of the movement, Swami Prabhupada. This activity has been developing rapidly in recent years and is one of the major sources of income for the temples.

Farm community

Since the early 1980s, the only Polish ISKCON farm has been going through ups and downs, due to the climate and difficult conditions for agriculture. So far the financial results of this enterprise have been questioning the idea of maintaining a rural community in this place and under these conditions.

Communication Office

The Gdansk Temple has become the information centre for the whole of Polish ISKCON, with the communication office based there, responsible for coordinating contacts with media and other important areas of the society.

Congregation development

ISKCON in Poland has been evolving from a monastic, closed community into a congregational movement, with more than 90% of its members active in outside society, either as householders or as students. Programs for cultivating and developing the ISKCON congregation operate in most temples, with the Wrocław centre as a model for others.

V. Conclusions

New Religious Movements, including ISKCON, are changing the picture of religious life in Poland and other East European countries. The unique historical changes following the downfall of the communist system in these countries created good conditions for the appearance and development of new religious phenomena. The rapid growth of NRMs, following the liberalisation of religious legislation in these countries and their general opening to the West, has enriched religious life in Poland. Among NRMs, ISKCON is one of the most prominent and noticeable examples. This paper has shown its growth and given a short historical perspective in Poland. ISKCON is unusual in that, for the first time in history, Polish people are becoming orthodox followers of a Hindu denomination. It seems that Vaishnavism, with its personal and communal character, has found its way into the minds and hearts of many people in this country. Despite its apparent cultural difference from the rest of society, ISKCON is becoming more a part of social, cultural, and religious life in Poland.

DEVOTEES OF KRISHNA IN HUNGARY

How have the new (almost all of them) Hungarian devotees received, evaluated, and interpreted this religion? Why did they choose a religion apparently alien to Christian culture? What is the impelling force behind the often unexpected conversion? How much is the religiosity of the devotees who are joining a “story” hardly known to themselves characterised by a conscious acceptance, “authentic translation,” and to what extent is Krishna consciousness pervading the different dimensions of their lives?

How are the Hungarian Krishna devotees received (evaluated and interpreted) by their environment, the people on the streets, followers of other religions (in this country mainly Christians), the media, politicians, and the devotees themselves? Is the cultural shock caused by the completely new lifestyle, culture, and the traditional knowledge replaced by Vedic knowledge avoidable or is it just mitigated by the happiness and bliss of the conversion and enlightenment? The Vedic Krishna religion simultaneously means knowledge, faith, sentiments, ceremonies, a lifestyle, and a community. Through which of these gates do the new devotees enter the new world and in what order do they become initiated into these dimensions? I undertaken the task of answering these questions when I started to research the world of the Hungarian Krishna devotees in the early autumn of 1995. Of course, this paper only includes the first steps and first partial results.

1. Radicalisation in a Windstorm

Krishna devotees appeared in Hungary, for the first time, at the end of the 1970s, but only in the second wave of the mission, in the middle of the 1980s, did a viable community develop. Their reception in Hungary, as Zsuzsa Horváth¹ also found it, was filled with both sympathy and antipathy. Since 1989, the Community of the Hungarian Krishna Conscious devotees (from now on HSKCON or Hare Krishnas²) has been a registered religion³ in our country. In 1993, half of the population had heard of them.

In the second year after the political change of regime, in September 1991, after the second country-wide Hare Krishna Festival, Geza Németh, a minister of the Reformed Church started an attack against the Krishnas in many newspapers.⁴ His main charges were brainwashing, dividing families, losing the consciousness of being Hungarian, slavery, psychological terror, tragedy of many young people, aggressive psychotechnology, total control, cunning means, and perversion of personality. The president of the council of the Reformed Church declared that Németh was not authorised to represent the stand of his church. One month later, together with two Protestant ministers,⁵ he founded the Helping Friend Team, the national

¹ Horvath, Zsuzsa: Plan for the study of the Society of Krishna Devotees in Hungary by = Hitek és Emberek (Faith and People) by Horvath Zsuzsa, 1995. ELTE Institute of Sociology and Social Politics.

² Although this expression is sometimes used pejoratively since the sympathisers most often also describe them in this way, the Krishna conscious devotees accept this name too.

³ At their incorporation they registered 50 persons.

⁴ Amongst them papers of the government and against the government, penny, and authentic press.

⁵ Győző, Dobner, the Baptist founder resigned from the organisation and stated "G. Németh was not fighting against the cultic symptoms but against the cults and has helped no parents" when in the beginning of 1993, Ibolya, the representative of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (Christian-democratic leading government party) in the name of a group of members of parliament and attorneys promised support for the Helping Friend team.

version of the anti-cult movement. Some of the goals of this Team are “disclosing information,” “alerting law enforcement agencies,” “establishing an authority to receive complaints against destructive cults,” “to act against the television and radio programs that are propagating these cults,” “to deprogram the victims of these cults,” and “to neutralise the economic and political penetration that is dangerous to national security.”⁶ In January of 1992, HSKCON presented a plea to the court. In the beginning of 1993, Németh suggested to a committee of representatives from 36 churches to distance themselves from dangerous religious groups (among them he named HSKCON), but the committee rejected the suggestion. Not much later Albert Tóth, a minister of the Reformed Church and a representative of the Hungarian Democratic Forum⁷, introduced an amendment to the committee on Human Rights of the Parliament that four churches which represent destructive ideologies – among them HSKCON – should not get support. On March 19, due to a resolution of the Parliament, HSKCON and three other religions⁸ ceased to get support from the government. At the end of that month, a bill was introduced, that to be qualified as a church, 10,000 natural citizens or a history of 100 years in Hungary is needed. The Publicity Club collected 63,000 protesting signatures against this and international protest was also strong. In April 1993, HSKCON presented a petition to the vice-president of the Parliament and this was signed by 140 well-known public figures. In the summer of 1993, the court handed down a judgment against G. Németh,⁹ and in the beginning of 1994 it rejected his appeal. In September 1993, Németh organised a conference about the cults, but only

⁶ From the declaration of intent (published on 16 November 1992) that came out in a leaflet entitled “The Chronicle of the Hungarian scandal of cults.”

⁷ The winning party of the election in the year 1991. It is one of the three Parliamentary parties calling themselves Christian.

⁸ Jehovah’s witnesses, The Hungarian Church of Scientology, and the Unification Church.

⁹ Justification: “In the newspaper called *Mai nap* he infringed upon the claimants’ rights in his article titled “Crusade of Modern Times” with his false statements.

those injured parents whom he had chosen could take part in it. He similarly selected the lectures. Zsuzsa Horváth who is the most noted Hungarian sociologist of religion in the area of New Religious Movements and cults requested permission to speak but her request was rejected. HSKCON performed a three-day peaceful musical demonstration in front of the entrance to the conference. In March 1994, the Parliament voted for governmental support for HSKCON and recognised the religious life and the charitable work of the church.¹⁰

To analyse what had happened is not so easy because its key figure – Németh who died in 1995 – “was undoubtedly a well-intentioned person who had been deprived of his congregation twenty years ago and was working as a travelling preacher who later helped the Transylvanian refugees and the neglected, drug-addicted young people.”¹¹ Furthermore this minister who urged the unity of the Christian churches had Martin Luther King and Gandhi as his role models. Why did he begin a campaign against the cults? And could he do it without extensive support? After the political change of regime he might have felt – as others did – that too many new values, standards, and traditions flowed in the country with the extended freedom. Frequently they appeared in the form of religious and spiritual movements. It is difficult for the ordinary citizen to distinguish between the valuable and the destructive, the real and the ersatz, between those things that can be taken to heart and those that can only be hung upon us. Many people might think, with good reason, that as the hamburger and Coca-Cola™ may push out the cuisine of our country, these newfangled spiritual-intellectual movements may do the same with European, Christian, and national values. Németh alerted the troops without proper political culture, sociological knowledge, and psychological sense in defense of a minority that was supposed to be injured: the complaining parents left by children joining new

¹⁰ At the same time, 11 churches – among them the three qualified as destructive – did not get support from the government.

¹¹ This is how Bálint, András B., the publicist who is also dealing with religion sociology describes him.

religious movements. Besides the “injured,” but in many cases not at all perfect parents, many people were standing behind and next to *G. Németh*: some of the ministers and the congregations of the “historic churches,” “a lot of workers of the so-called Christian parties,” among them, many members of Parliament, temporarily the majority of the “mass media,” and the majority of the general public who were “uninformed” and did not have a tradition of “tolerating those who are different” (because they did not have the democratic training). What J.G. Melton¹² states in connection with the tragedy of the Davidian sect in Waco is true for all of them: “after the decay of Communism, a new enemy is needed for the maintenance of identity.” In the eyes of Németh and his allies, this enemy is the Western world (mainly the U.S.A.) and the liberalism and the cults which are expanding from the West to the East because they suppress and absorb the national values. Nevertheless, László Bartus raised a thought provoking point in a noted liberal newspaper: “The summer-long exaggerated campaign of the Hare Krishnas played a great part in the explosion of the affair of the cults. Those little religious communities which demand acceptance by the society have to learn to have respect for the limits of the majority.”¹³

II. “Krishna Drug,” “Krishna Party,” “Krishna Festival,” “Krishna Dinner,” Krishna-Village: Krishnas in the Hungarian Press

These typical article titles from 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995, accurately describe the Hungarian reception of the Krishnas. Apart from several-line news items and pictures with one sentence commentary, 50-70 articles per annum have been published about the Krishnas in a total of 70 printed matters.

¹² Melton, J. Gordon: *A Fiery Ending in From the Ashes Making Sense of Waco*. (Ed. J.R. Lewis) Boston. 1994. Rowman and Littlefield Publ. 253-260.

¹³ Bartus, László: *A szektaüldöző szekták*. (Cults persecuted by cults) In *Beszélő*. 01.16.1993. p.16-18.

Half of the articles deal with the introduction of the Krishna religion, one-quarter of these show the Krishna faith "through people." There have been six deep, thorough analyses amongst them. Most of them present the Krishna devotees "as a curiosity," and besides the most important information they are interested in the clothes, the transmigration, the eating, and sexual habits. The other half of the articles deals with "events," most of them (15% of the texts) with the festivals and – in due course – with the food distributions, the conference organised by Németh, the Legal Case, the parliamentary decision against the Krishnas, the Krishna village, the scientific conference organised by the Krishnas for introducing their religion, and with the rock musician who became converted to the Krishna faith.

Between January 1991 and September 1995, 35% of the articles were published in national papers, 30% in regional and local daily papers, 9% in political weekly papers, 8% in weekly popular papers, and 3% in art and scientific journals. There was very little published in youth and religious papers. In 1991, 51% of the articles were "neutral-objective," 39% were "negative," and 11% were "positive." In the next year, the number of neutral-objective articles grew to 66% and the number of negative ones decreased to 20%. In 1991, the number of articles dealing with "novelty" and breaking news (more or less neutral in tone) increased from 9% to 21% taking the place of the negative articles. By 1993, the number of negative articles had decreased even more (to 9%) and the number of those favoring the Krishnas had increased three fold compared to the year 1991. This was the year of the change; the majority (82%) of the articles published in the next two years were already neutral-objective. According to my estimate, at least 40% of the positive articles were the result of the very effective public relation activity of ISKCON. Forty percent were published in left-wing papers and in the penny press, 10% in mostly right wing and Christian Democratic papers which, in 1991, had published negative articles. From 1992 on, the number of those articles has gradually increased, and instead of titles like "Krishna party" and "Divine rock" (as they had appeared at the beginning), carried titles like "Peace be with you," "Meeting with the attractive superior being," "Purifying the heart," "Krishna's charitable children,"

“Krishna village – open to the world,” and “Cart festival in the sign of tolerance.” Altogether, ten “prominent publicists” wrote a dozen articles about the Krishnas. Eight of them wrote positively. Besides Németh, a dozen “distinguished public figures” (scientists, politicians, artists, priests) expressed their opinion. Seven of them were positive, three were thoughtful and objective, and only two negative.

What was the cause of this quick, highly visible change? Did the new “democratic publicity” work, proving that Hungary belongs to Europe? In part, yes. The freedom of religion was the case to be tested, and there were very few newspapers – after some uncertainty in the beginning – that failed this exam. Is it possible that we have to seek the explanation mostly in the socialist and liberal orientated press? There may be some truth in this, but the fact that by 1992-1993, the right-wing and the Christian democratic press also seemed to take a positive stance contradicts this. The Krishnas’ more careful and skillful public relations could have played a serious role. Another similarly important factor could be that the penny papers quickly gave up their negative tone and took advantage of the “novelty” and breaking news potential of the exotic Krishna subjects. The news itself and simple description proved to be interesting, at least in the first few years.

The attack brought grist to the Krishnas’ mill and the public opinion about them changed very much: from a public enemy, a suspicious different people, a threatening conqueror, they became “strange and exotic” or a society not only “worth smiling or wondering at” but also worth respecting. They are less and less seen as a “cult” and more as an ancient culture which is both very alien and very interesting at the same time. Although it is not understandable in its totality, it is perceived as approachable, accessible and doable in its details.

III. “Fishing in the Fishpond of Eastern Europe”: Christian Churches About the Krishnas

The religion where the Bhagavad Gita is the Bible is considered to be a Western (!) cult “fishing in troubled water” by an editorial of the widest

circulation paper of the Reformed Church.¹⁴ In a Catholic popular paper a “scholarly” monk writes about the Krishnas in the series: *The Web of the Satan*. He turns Christ, who redeemed us by dedicating himself completely but who was behaving naturally, thus even eating meat, against the pretentious godhead of Krishna consciousness – that is, inspired by Satan – who not only forbids meat-eating for his followers but also love, while in devotional pictures he is represented as making love with his consort.¹⁵ After the ominous Parliamentary decision, the Catholic philosopher Zoltán Endreffy on the one hand establishes that the basis of this suggestion is “distrust” which is contrary to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, and on the other, he remarks: “the big churches can also deteriorate.” Tamás Majsai, a minister of the Reformed Church and newspaper editor, wrote: “the big churches are enjoying immensely the field that was expanded for them from 1899-90 and they are afraid of the the soul fishing of the legalised little churches.” There is also some truth in it but the picture is more tinted. Béla Balás, a Catholic bishop and a legendary figure of the movements persecuted by the party government regime, thinks that the “secularised world” is the cause of the presence of the Krishnas since in this world there is need for silent thinking, desire for self control, and aspiration to transcendence. Catholics and Krishna devotees share this endeavor but according to Balás, this counts for little. He thinks – and in this he is definitely right – “their way of life is too strict and too hard for the Hungarian nation with its injured soul.” Finally he establishes “it would need incredible patience to understand each other and even to get closer.”¹⁷ His opinion is important because the Krishna village is being built in his diocese. The report that

¹⁴ Medgyesi, László: *A Kelet-európai halastó* (The East-European stewpond) In “Reformátusok Lapja”. 09.09.1992. p.1-2.

¹⁵ Kiss, Ullrich: *A Sátán hálójában* (In the Web of Satan) In Uj Ember 03.14.1995.

¹⁶ Gyémant, Mariann: *A történelmi egyházak mossák kezeiket* (The Historical Churches Wash Their Hands) In “Magyar Nemzet” 04.14.1993.

¹⁷ Gulyas, Attila: *Ez itt nem Walt Disney-show* (This is not a Walt Disney show here) In “Magyar Nemzet” 09.02.1995.

Tamás Barabás (Trisa hara dasa), a leader of HSKCON, made to me makes the picture cloudier still. He was in charge of approaching the main leaders of theology, churches, and monastic orders after the ominous parliamentary decision of March 1993. He asked for their solidarity or possibly their signature protesting against the discrimination. His experiences with the Catholic Church seem to me representative and they are similar to my own. The majority of the representatives of theology refused even to meet him. Among the seven bishops, one affirmed with his signature that the attack against the Krishnas was contrary to “Christian ethics.” The greater part of them showed warm “sympathy” and they have had a positive relationship since then, others showed polite or sincere interest. Among the five monastic orders, two signed – one probably because they were very much afraid of the victory of the socialist party. In the monasteries the Krishna representative who was asking for help was accepted as a “partner,” “colleague,” or brother and they were able to talk more substantially.

An Adventist leader and a Lutheran bishop also signed the protest and the rector of a Protestant academy offered to welcome Krishna students in their institute.

IV. “In the Drumfire of False Doctrines”: Krishna Consciousness in the Mirror of Scientific and Educational Books

There are half a dozen Hungarian books dealing with cults and new religious movements but they “misinform” the reader in most cases. One slender brochure was published by the Society for Scientific Education. This was the first sign of the Documentation and Information Centre for protection against the cults that are dangerous to society.¹⁸ This Centre was strongly

¹⁸ *Szezták* (Cults) (Ed. Lugosi, Gyozo) Budapest 1994. TIT p:79) The basis of this volume was the publication called *Les Sectes en France* and two chapters were written by G. Németh.

influenced by Németh. According to this work, the Krishna religion is a “pseudo science and brainwashing” of crowds. The majority of the facts and figures are wrong, and the attitude is prejudiced. The other publications are from churches. From the Catholic camp, in the book of G. De Rosa the keywords are “magic,” “brainwashing,” and “dictatorship.”¹⁹ Amongst the two Hungarian authors, one speaks about Krishna Consciousness as part of New Age, as an “aggressive and destructive cult.” He compares its being “opposed to family and children,” to Communist and Hitlerian educational principles.²⁰ The author of the other book is a scholarly Benedictine who is critical of his own church and quite tolerant of the “cults.” He deals with the Krishna religion quite fairly and gives a lot of attention to other religious phenomena which are not yet present in Hungary.²¹ Amongst the two Protestant books, one is a short brochure which says that the non-Christian cults and movements are “traps” and our fellow-countrymen²² should be most definitely warned against them. The other is a more thorough, larger work and the author of this book must have studied the phenomenon in America as well. He gives good information about the conference organised by the Krishnas to introduce their religion (although he consciously did not go but received its material). And then he tries to refute the statements of István Tasi, the Hungarian writer of the book²³ comparing Christianity with Krishna religion.

It can be stated that even the reader of the penny press can be more informed about Krishna religion than the reader of these books. The more

¹⁹ De Rosa, Giuseppe: *Vallások, kultuszok és a kereszténység* (Religions, cults and the Christianity) Budapest, 1991, Szent István Társulat p.250.

²⁰ Gal, Péter: *A New Age – keresztény szemmel* (The New age by the vision of Christianity) Abaliget – Budapest 1994. Lámpás K. – Szegletko K. p.400.

²¹ Tarnay, Brunó: *A katolicizmus és a kultuszok*. (Catholicism and cults) Pannonhalma, 1994. Bencés Kiadó. p.200.

²² *Protestánsok, kisegyházak, szekták*. (Protestants, little churches, cults.) Budapest, 1991. Ökumenikus Tanulmányi Központ p.32.

²³ Tasi, Istvan: *Christianity and Krishna Consciousness*. Budapest, HSKCON 1993.

demanding readers, the interested intellectuals, or the concerned relatives cannot really get thorough and bona fide information because the majority of the books published in the Hungarian language are written in the spirit of defense against a supposed enemy.

V. "I Received an Answer for Everything": Meeting with Krishna Consciousness

I have gathered some data about the conversion, integration, transformation of lifestyle and value scales and changing of the connection with the mundane world from almost 100 Krishna followers through question, personal conversations and interviews.²⁴ They are one-tenth of the most inner circle which is estimated to have 900-1000 persons according to the leaders of the HSKCON. (The initiated monks, the student monks aspiring for initiation, belong here and those who practice their religion seriously.)²⁵

The majority (70%) of those who filled the forms are 21-30 years old, the proportion of those who are younger to those who are older is equal, the proportion of men to women is equal. Mostly they have at least a secondary education. Half of them have been to a specialised secondary school or secondary grammar school, one-tenth have university education,

²⁴ At the time of writing this study I have 77 question forms. 25 students are not initiated, 26 students are initiated (13 have received first, 13 have received second initiation), 11 are not initiated and 3 are initiated householders (grihasta), 2 belong to the renounced order of life (sannyasa). 5 are members of the national management, 8 are members of the temple councils. I performed 10 and my students performed 7 interviews and I could also use a dozen of the thorough interviews published in the press.

²⁵ In some statements to the press, the leaders of HSKCON mention 8-12,000 devotees. According to Tamás Barabas (one of the leaders of the HSKCON) 190-200 live in the temple, 700-900 practice their religion seriously, on the 4 festivals 9-10,000 persons gave their names many of whom go to different Krishna programs. The number of followers and non-followers, regular and less regular practitioners is unknown.

three times that many had vocational training.²⁶ The number of those who went to university after secondary school is small, twice as many people stopped or did not start their studies because of their conversion. The majority are from towns, twice as many are from the country as from the capital. On this basis, Zsuzsa Horvath's statement about the Faith-Church²⁷ seems to be true for the Krishnas as well: "They can mostly recruit from those who have enough free time for taking part actively and those who are socially less integrated or they are in a temporary or marginal position and thus it is relatively less risky for them to join a cult movement."²⁸

It is remarkable that a large part (65%) of the Krishnas whom I know did not belong to any church or religious group before his or her conversion. One part called themselves "materialist and atheist", the other part called themselves a "believer" and they accepted a "superior spiritual power," and there are many of them who were thinking about reincarnation. The majority of the rest belonged to the Catholic Church and fewer to the reformed Church, but most of them were religious only in their childhood or only superficially, without active practice, real experience of God, or religious values.

In 1995, two-thirds had dedicated themselves to Krishna consciousness 4-7 years before, the remainder 1-3 years before. The majority first met Krishna consciousness through books, secondly through the open temple

²⁶ The proportion of those who, after secondary school, continue their studies in the universities (6%) is half of those who left their university studies or most likely gave up their studies because of their conversion – in spite of getting such direct inspiration from the Krishna Church.

²⁷ A Neoprotestant, charismatic congregation of Hungarian origin which was founded 15 years ago and is improving most dynamically and currently has 25 members.

²⁸ Horváth, Zsuzsa: *A Hit Gyülekezetének szociológiai sajátosságai*. (The sociological Qualities of the Congregation of Faith) in "Hitek es Emberek" (Faith and People) by Zsuzsa Horvath, Budapest 1995 EILTE.

programs, and festivals where they were generally invited by their friends. The most attractive thing for most of them at first was the "behaviour and attitude (mainly the kindness and pureness) of the Krishna followers" (40%), and the Vedic philosophy (30%). The strangest, the most difficult part to understand and realise for them was the renunciation of sensual gratification and the philosophy in general (mainly Krishna's incarnations), the Sanskrit language, the habits (mainly the way of dressing and the Vedic picture of man).

The family of the majority (55%) reacted negatively, 15% positively, and the others with worry; they found it strange or they were surprised. The opinion of the majority's parents, brothers, and sisters changed more or less positively.

Beginning my research, it seemed to me that the statement of J.T. Richardson about the quality of the conversions in the modern age is less true for those who became converted to the Krishna faith in Hungary.²⁹ In this inner circle I experienced neither joining with "hidden reservations," nor "negotiations." To study the changes of attitude, conviction, and scales of values, and to discover if Krishna consciousness is a first step in a long and continuous search needs more thorough research (including a study of those who leave the Krishna church). This much seems to be unambiguous: there is no sign of brainwashing or dishonest force. Those who became converted cannot be simply categorised as having a deficiency or undergoing a crisis (feeling the vanity and uselessness of life, lack of self-confidence, anguish, fear of death, an unsuccessful marriage). They also have "positive inspirations" (vegetarian eating, interest for the Vedic and Indian culture, Yoga, mysticism, transcendence, reincarnation).

²⁹ Richardson, J.T.: *Conversion, Brainwashing, and Deprogramming in the New Religious Movements* = *The Centre Magazine*. 1982. 2. p.18-24.

For the question “What does Krishna consciousness mean for you?” more than one-third chose the following: way of life (70%), knowledge (65%), faith (55%), security and community (40%). Only 15-35% chose “enlightenment”, “certainty”, “feelings”, “mission”, and “ritual”. They made an important addition: for 40% Krishna consciousness meant the “goal and meaning of life.” In comparison with Christianity, the majority of them (20%) see the advantage of Krishna consciousness in its authority; for many it seems to be more scientific, practical, and easier to realise. In the Christian religion, most (35%) consider Jesus Christ and the Bible (10%) valuable and honorable.

Naturally we have to take into account that the new followers paint their lives before their conversion darkly (willingly or not), and they explain it in terms of their present concepts. In doing so, they suppress the old life and justify the present one. Supposedly, this might explain for the Krishna followers’ feeling that Krishna consciousness “changed their life radically.” Mostly they find the change as follows: their human relationships became happier, more harmonised, they found their goal in life, and became more spiritual. One-third of them changed their social status (they changed their intellectual work to physical, and mundane studies to studies in the monastery). This is not true for the majority only because they met Krishna consciousness just after finishing their secondary studies and before starting their job or university studies. Most of them feel that their “personality changed”: they became more open, sincere, patient, balanced, peaceful, and determined. In spite of distancing themselves from their families (because they moved into the temple) they reported that their relationships with the members of their family – such as children, parents, husband, or wife – had improved.

Their interest has become narrower and broader at the same time. Broader for the inner and transcendent world, and they were less interested in the events, institutions, amusement, science, and art of the mundane (they say “material” or “sensual”) world. Most of them are not (60%) or hardly (20%) interested in politics and they have the same attitude towards the non-Vedic sciences which they consider atheist, faithless, unnecessary, and im-

perfect. Their attitude towards art is less ambiguous for the proportion is the same of those who think it is not interesting, positive, or not the condition of using it in Krishna's service, acceptable. Amusement for them means to associate with the devotees (20%), reading, music, and talking (15%) and singing, the festivals, the kirtana, reading of holy books, hearing the preaching, accepting the sanctified food, and dance (5-15%). One-third of them do not read anything but holy books, one-third only newspapers. Five to fifteen percent read educational books (natural healing, esoteric literature, training of children) and also fiction. Two-thirds of them have not been to the theater for more than a year, four-fifths have not been to the cinema, 45% have not watched television and the others have watched mostly news and short films on nature.

I studied their scale of values by the Rokeach test which lists 18 goals and 18 means values. I had the opportunity to compare it with the same aged (but a little more educated) members of a Catholic community whose religion and obligation is closest to theirs. The 6-6 values that most of them choose or rejected were the follows:

Krishna	Catholics
<p><i>Chosen by most:</i></p> <p>Discipline (having self-control)</p> <p>Obedience (dutiful, respectful)</p> <p>Responsible (reliable)</p> <p>Intelligent (thoughtful)</p> <p>Wisdom</p> <p>Peace (world free from war, conflicts)</p> <p><i>Most rejected:</i></p> <p>Pleasant life (enjoyments,</p> <p>Pleasures, a lot of free time)</p> <p>Recognition by the society (honor)</p> <p>Material riches (wealth)</p> <p>Logical thinking (rational)</p> <p>Real love (intimate bodily and intellectual relationship)</p> <p>Independence (strong personality)</p>	<p>Salvation (redemption, eternal life)</p> <p>Inner harmony (life without inner tension)</p> <p>Real love (intimate bodily and intellectual relationship)</p> <p>Family security (taking care of our beloveds)</p> <p>Helpful (working for others' welfare)</p> <p>Full of love (attached, tender)</p> <p>Material welfare (riches)</p> <p>Endeavor (hard working)</p> <p>pleasant life (free time)</p> <p>Recognition by the society (honor)</p> <p>Politeness (well behaved)</p> <p>Clean (neat, tidy)</p>

The similarity is conspicuous for in these two scale of values, the spiritual values are more important than in the non-religious classes, but the difference is also sharp. In the life of deeply Catholic people, human relationships and feelings are much more important and in the case of the Krishnas the suppression of the ego or – as they say – the “devotion.”

VII. Instead of Summary

It could have been accidental that the growth of HSKCON happened to be just at the time of change in the political regime but we have to take into account that people lose their feeling of home because of social changes and in exchange for “security” they accept, at least seemingly, more dependence.

Even at the beginning of this research we can feel that the Krishnas become part of a story which is more or less unfamiliar to them, but its many elements enchant them. However, the conscious acceptance and realisation of values supposedly happens slowly. The everyday thinking and the way of life of the Krishnas is strongly penetrated by their faith. [Stronger than the mentality and way of life of the little churches or the base community members and not only stronger but different: in the case of the deeply believing Christian the transcendent and mundane values are more harmonious (or we might say: they make compromises).]

It is difficult to decide whether the world of the new Krishna followers became narrower or broader. It needs more study to clarify whether the habits, standards, and values of the mundane world simply fall out or they get readjusted, become secondary, suspicious, or get re-evaluated in a new context: the profane gets Vedic legitimacy and the habits, activities, and values held up to now become means instead of ends in themselves and get new contents. In any case, K. Mannheim’s thought seems applicable to their case: “the thoughts directed upwards from below are replaced by thoughts directed downwards from above.”³⁰

³⁰ Mannheim, Karl: *Strukturen des Denkens*. Frankfurt am Main, 1980. Suhrkamp, V.

THE UNIFICATION CHURCH IN POLAND

The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, commonly known as the Unification Church or Unification Movement, was registered in Poland – as a denominational union – in January of 1990. The registration papers included the statutes and the membership was listed. The statutes contained six chapters, sixty articles, and two appended documents. I will quote those rules directly concerning religious matters and becoming a member: “The Unification Church has its own system based on the truth from the Old and New Testaments and on the visions received by Sun Myung Moon from God. The main purpose of the Unification Church is to create God’s Kingdom here on earth and in the spirit world. A Unification Church member can be anyone of legal age and who accepts the main goals of the Unification Church, participates in its activities and who declares his/her availability by signing a declaration. People who are not of legal age can become Unification Church members after obtaining legal written permission from their parents and/or legal guardians. There are two categories of membership. The first is formed by associate members and the second are full-time members who live according to the “Divine Principle” and are therefore missionaries.”

A National Representative leads the Unification Church. The National Representative, from article 35 of the statutes, “is the spiritual leader of all Unification Church members in the Polish Republic and should receive respect and honor as such.” At present this person is Mr. Janusz Mazur. He was the first Pole who came in contact, in France, in 1974 with the teachings

of Sun Myung Moon and became his follower. After his return to Poland – as he says himself in a published interview – (Era Ducha Świętego – z Januszem Mazurem rozmawia Zofia Migus. “Dziś” 1995, nr 10, pp. 88-92) from October 1974 to 1989, he collaborated closely with the Catholic Church, keeping his mission concealed. “Towards the Catholic Church I always behaved very honestly – I never used the Church’s property nor did I ever use church meetings to further my teachings. I began teaching starting with my family, friends, and colleagues from the University, those that had broken contact with the Catholic religion or were indifferent to it. Officially I was working as a maintenance man in a parish church, during the period of martial law I was a driver, cameraman, and I organised the supply of petrol. During my time underground I taught the doctrine to a few people, and I helped them to leave the country. For safety reasons I would play the role of a fanatical Catholic, because the Unification Church’s ideology was not acceptable in a Communist country. I broke my relationship with the Catholic Church in 1989. The Catholic Church started to see a rival in me. I preferred to withdraw even though I had many friends among the priests.”

According to reports by one of the leaders, there are presently more than 400 members in Poland. Their organisational status is differentiated depending on: 1) their degree of “Divine Principle” acceptance (from total acceptance, to being in training, to introduction); 2) location (within the community, and outside it); 3) marital status (before Blessing and after Blessing); 4) the number of hours dedicated to the needs of the Movement (full-time members who are not working professionally – missionaries; active members who are working professionally and thus less active in the Unification Church; passive members, and sympathetic members).

Centres for the Unification Church, that is houses and communal apartments (flats), exist in many town and cities in Poland. The largest number are located in Krakow: 8; in Warsaw: 7; in Gdańsk: 4; two each in Wrocław and Poznań – and one each in Łódź, Lublin, Szczecin, Ostrołęka, Rzeszów, and Zakopane. This maps the presence of believers in Sun Myung Moon in Poland. They are mostly active in larger cities, and are made up of young people in their twenties and thirties. Sixty percent are women, and 40%

men. The Unification Church tries to attract new members especially among the youth from the 'academic circles.' According to J. Mazur, "The Catholic Church doesn't reach academic youth, often rebellious and modern. Due to the lack of competition from that side we can boldly approach and proceed and so far there have been no conflicts with the Catholic Church in this area" (op cit p.90).

The Unification Church being a minority and in opposition to Christianity, in spite of their name, and in order to protect the status quo don't want to show their "true face." For that reason, I believe, I was not able to get either numerical statistics showing the demographic characteristics of ex- and present members, or full information on the subject of the finances of the Unification Church in Poland.

The leaders of the Unification Church reassure us that they receive no financing from outside. Operating finances come from the family members, physically present and legally registered, and also in the form of tithes from the members.

In the life of the Polish Unification Church community the most important moments – besides the fact of registration – were two visits to Poland by Mrs. H.J. Moon in 1993, and in 1995 as the president of the Women's Federation for Peace, and a visit by Mr. Moon himself on the November 7, 1995 with a proclamation "the True Family and I," as well as two visits to Seoul by a Polish delegation to be Blessed. In 1993, sixty marriages were arranged, and in 1995, 124 Poles got married.

For a sociologist, a believable source of information is obtained by survey studies conducted among the Polish Unification Movement members. Motives for conversion were studied, the place of God and religion in one's own value system, and also the reaction of their families towards their change of beliefs. The empirical research was conducted in January 1995, during the Polish National Convention of Unification Church members, on the occasion of S. M. Moon's and his wife's birthday (they were born on the same day). The questionnaire contained 25 questions. It was answered by 96 respondents: 41 male (42.7%) and 55 female (57.3%). The population distribution according to gender is closely related to the overall percentage

of the total population. Most members are young people – 82.8% are below thirty years of age. Not all who were tested defined themselves as members of the Unification Church. Thirteen of them (13.5%) were sympathetic to the movement and were undergoing a short internship. The remaining 86 converted during the 1990s, that is, after their official registration and permission to open their mission. In the 1980s, 10 respondents declared access to the Unification Church (11.1%); 12 respondents in 1990 (13.3%); 15 respondents in 1991 (16.7%); 17 respondents in 1992 (18.9%); 16 respondents in 1993 (17.8%); and 20 respondents in 1994 (22.2%).

In the group of members (N=83), three categories were differentiated: 1) passive believer – six people; 2) active believer – thirty-nine respondents; 3) missionary – thirty-eight respondents (45.8%). In accordance with the organisation's by-laws, members are obliged to proselytise. Those presently teaching and recruiting new members were in a different role not long ago. Respondents were asked: who was the person that brought you into the Unification Church? In ten cases it was someone from their family (8: siblings; 1: wife; 1: grown daughter). Thirty-one people were introduced to the Unification Church by someone they knew. On the basis of the above results we can see that 43.2% of respondents were introduced to the Unification Church by people close to them. The remaining 56.8% were recruited by missionaries. Presently they themselves are trying to be successful missionaries. In answer to the question "have you ever recruited anyone to the Unification Church?" over half answered positively.

Almost 90% of those tested have a minimum of a high school education. One-fourth (26%) are presently engaged in higher education, almost the same number (24%) have completed their higher education. Those tested come from cities (68.8%) as well as from villages (31.2%). Presently they live mostly in large cities. Seventy-four respondents live in communes. Communes are mixed. Among believers a family relationship exists that involves self-identifying as children of the True Parents and treating each other as siblings. As they assure us themselves, existing relationships were never violated. One of the rules rigorously observed is the rule of purity in actions, speech, and thoughts.

An important indicator showing the motive for conversion is a knowledge of the respondent's relationship to their first religion. Of all 90.6% the respondents were born into Catholic families. Four people declared atheism as their previous belief. Five of the respondents belonged to religions other than Catholic.

A commonly used indicator to determine one's attitude towards religion is the question "what is your religious belief?" Of all the respondents 82.3% declared themselves to be believers, and of those, 29.2% were devout (deep) believers. Analysis of the answers to questions about the role of the religion in which they were raised, as to God's presence in their lives and their religious experiences, allows us to estimate that 60% of the population were above average religious. "Above average religious" means participation in non-required religious practices, active participation within the Catholic Church, needing the presence of God in their daily lives, ideological search, lectures, and discussions about religion. Religion that is "above average" present in a person's life molds his everyday activities and marks the ideological boundaries of self-realisation. Eighteen people actively participated in Oasis, the Light and Life Movement, in the Academic Clergy, Renewal in the Holy Ghost, and served as altar-boys and other church activities. Twenty-five went as pilgrims to Jasna Góra and to other religious cult places.

Not too long ago, most present members were practicing Catholics. Religion is still the most important element in their lives, in spite of the changes in their beliefs. The same is true for "summer Catholics" and atheists. Missionaries totally dedicate their lives to religion. They divide their time between serving the Unification Church and spiritual self-realisation. The average day for a missionary consists of individual prayer, community prayer, studying the "Divine Principle," meditation, contemplation, and individual and group studies with new members (adepts). All of the missionaries and most of the active members live within the groups communes. Constant association with each other mobilises them, not through social pressure, but through awareness of communal goals, beliefs, and their position in society. The commune is recognised by a preferred value system

that sets its identity boundaries and identifies with all of the believers regardless of race, culture, nationality, or political affiliation. For the Unification Church, the idea of human togetherness is of utmost importance. The way to achieve total openness and understanding beyond individual differences is through a common language equally understood by everyone. Knowledge of English is indispensable in the case of culturally mixed marriages.

When asked “what is most important thing for you in the Unification Church?” the following range of answers was given: 1) the belief that the “Divine Principle” and belonging to the Unification Church will help me to change my life for the better, I will become a better and more meaningful person – 64.6%; 2) the values taught in the Unification Church – 63.5%; 3) the belief that Rev. S. M. Moon is ordained by God as the Messiah – 54.2%; 4) interpretation of the doctrine in “Divine Principle” – 45.8%; 5) the guarantee of a happy marriage – 33.3%.

A lot of attention is devoted in the Unification Church to self-improvement and group therapy. Special workshops entitled “who are you?” are conducted with the goals of positive motivation, stimulation of channeled self-reflection, creating feelings of self-worth, and the strength to overcome negative traits. Consolidated group consciousness in striving towards perfection mobilises individual members.

People sympathetic to the Unification Church point out qualities such as a well-wishing atmosphere in the community and spontaneous caring towards other people. “We don’t want anything from you. We want to share with you our happiness and our search for truth” is what they say. When directly interviewed, the young people who participated in the study are authentic enthusiasts of their new beliefs and they want to share them with others. Proselytising becomes an internal need. They are convinced that the existence of God’s Kingdom on earth is only possible when all people accept Moon’s doctrines and bring his ideas into full working reality. That is why the Unification Church doesn’t want to be a closed religious body, the only one that is privileged to know the truth. It has a need to expand because only then can they themselves live on earth as if in Paradise.

Those that accept the Unification Movement and declare their active participation have many internal (personal) predispositions as well as external causes. Those predisposition and causes are not only the “techniques of persuasion” practiced, the “brain-washing” which, in the final analysis, amounts to nothing more than meeting for many hours and days, but are also a specific climate existing within the commune. Above all, it is the internal belief and attitude shared by the missionaries that potential new members respond to when approached. There is a mutual fulfillment of needs occurring between the missionaries that instill the beliefs and their recipients, enabling them to find a common ground in their dialogue. Membership in the Unification Church is made by conscious choice. Furthermore, the existing rules of proselytising allows new members to quickly “come over to the other side,” so that they themselves may become missionaries. To the outside observer the enthusiastic joining of the commune, the radical changes in value systems and in lifestyle by new members could look like “dirty” manipulation.

This suspicion is especially strong in the eyes of parents who have the hardest time accepting the fact that their children have thrown away their own value system. Mothers and siblings more often than fathers and friends are able to accept changes in beliefs in a person close to them. This points to a greater emotional bond that makes it easier – in the name of love – to compromise. There are a few cases where respondents successfully convinced their mothers (5 people) and siblings (9 people) to become members of the Unification Church. In only one case did the parents respond drastically and broke all ties with their child. Most parents in not accepting their children’s decision, try to persuade them to leave the Unification Movement. Rejection (in varying degrees) by their previous environment, causes greater concentration on their new environment in search of comfort of existence, love, and full acceptance. The greater the protest in his/her own home, the stronger he/she becomes attached to the commune. It is possible that families of respondents are aware of this psychological truth. Not wanting to lose a child, they take an attitude of acceptance or they simply pretend that they don’t care.

On a personal level, the question: “why do I need a new church?” often reflects a disappointment at not having successfully passed on to a child a religious heritage that has been meaningful to the mother or father. On a more abstract level, it may reflect the despair that grows out of rampant religious pluralism, which exists presently in Poland as elsewhere. For one reason or another, the Unification Church is where its members have found the identity, purpose, security, and acceptance necessary for them to feel that they have a place in the realisation of God’s plans.

HINDUISM IN POLAND

Alongside Buddhism, Hinduism is the second great Asian religious tradition currently present in Poland. Unlike Buddhism, which in Poland manifests itself only in its religious form, Hinduism appears not only as a religion but also in a variety of movements on the border between religion and other cultural domains: science, therapy, and art.

The reception of Hinduism in Poland may be chronologically divided into four periods: 1) Romantic fascination in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century among messianic poets and philosophers, 2) Theosophy and other occult movements inspired by Hindu ideas and practices in the first half of the 20th century, 3) parareligious movements in the 1960s and early 1970s in therapy and art, and 4) hinduistic religious and parareligious missions up to now.

Interest in Hinduism appeared in Poland as a result of Romantic fascination with an idealised Indian spiritual tradition known only from secondary sources. The ideas of Johann Gotfried Herder concerning the spiritual similarity between Hindu and Slavic mind sets has had great resonance in Poland, influencing Polish Messianism, which “may be philosophically classified as ‘spiritualistic universal perfectionism’ based on a belief in ‘progressive reincarnation’ combined with romantic anti-rationalism and hero-worship” (Walicki 1983:137). All three leading prophetic poets of this period (Mickiewicz, Słowacki, and Krasiński) believed in reincarnation although only Słowacki stressed the Indian sources of his belief as being a part of a larger doctrine which “presents a peculiar amalgamation of the

Upanishadic doctrine of the psycho-cosmic salvation through evolution with the hetero-soteriological conception proper to Buddhism" (Falk 1951:231).

Some of his ideas were put into practice in the "Eleusis" movement established in 1903 by Wincenty Lutosławski (1863-1954), who continued the Romantic tradition, believing that Poland was a cultural intermediary between oriental and Western spiritual traditions and for whom Hindu yoga exercises were to be an element in the physical and spiritual renewal of the Polish nation (Lutoslawski 1909). His personal experience with yoga was described by William James (1907) on the basis of correspondence with Lutoslawski. After several years of activity, the movement and Lutosławski himself began to be criticised by the Church for their attempts to blend oriental religious traditions with Christianity, which was one of the main elements in the decline of "Eleusis" after 1912.

Another important movement connected with Hindu religious tradition was the Polish Theosophical Society founded in 1920, which was also related to the tradition of Polish Romantic messianism but in a different way, emphasising the very special role of Poland in the European spiritual tradition due to the so-called "Vavel Lotus," one of the most important "chakrams of the earth." Its role was emphasised by George Arundale, during his visit in Poland in 1932: "There exists in Kraków a Spiritual Centre, established 2,000 years ago by Apollonius of Tyana. It is a kind of geyser from which flows incessantly a stream of spiritual forces, never mind if they are used or not. This makes the city even today a spiritual centre which will become in the future the focus of these forces for the whole of Central Europe" (Chodkiewicz 1966).

Many members of the Polish Theosophical Society were (as in "Eleusis") important figures in Polish public life in the twenties and thirties. Their influence was such that they were able to organise the funeral of Marshal Józef Piłsudski as an act of white magic needed to awaken the "Vavel Lotus" on the exact full moon on the Wesak holiday May 18, 1935, 10:57 a.m. (Chodkiewicz 1966).

Many Theosophists, despite their pacifism, were active members of the military guerrilla action during World War II. One of them, General

Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski, was the first commandant of the Polish underground army at the beginning of the Nazi occupation. After the war, the Theosophical Society was allowed to restart its activity, but was soon de-legalised and many of its members were put into prison during the Stalinist repression. From that period, it never regained its former position and legal status. More active is one of its offshoots, Agni Yoga, founded in Russia in the twenties by Nikolai and Helena Roerich, which has been present in Poland since the thirties.

Communist Poland, especially during its first twenty years, did not provide favorable conditions for the growth in interest of the Indian religious tradition, at least not in public. It began to appear at the end of the sixties, at first in therapy and art; domains not directly related to religion.

The first public appearance of elements of Indian tradition after World War II was connected to the field of therapy and physical culture. Due to the activity of Tadeusz Pasek, who studied at the Indian Academy in Lonavla, elements of Hatha Yoga, devoid of any religious or occult interpretations, were introduced as relaxation-concentration exercises to centers run by the Society for the Propagation of Physical Culture in Warsaw, Gdańsk, Lublin, and Poznań (Pasek, 1973). The physiological and psychological effects of these exercises were studied and positive changes in neuro-vegetative balance and control of emotional activity were observed (Romanowski et al., 1969). Since 1974, Hatha Yoga exercises together with other practices related to oriental traditions (Zen meditation, etc.) have been included as part of the drug addiction therapy program in Lubiąż Mental Hospital (Doktór et al., 1975). This was the beginning of a psychotherapeutic tradition that used oriental techniques as a method of therapy especially in the field of drug and alcohol dependency (Burska et al., 1987; Doktor, 1994b).

Other experimental forms of therapy used in Lubiąż included para-theatrical exercises, developed by Jerzy Grotowski in the Laboratory Theater in Wrocław. They may also be interpreted as indirectly inspired by Hindu spiritual traditions. According to Jerzy Grotowski, performing arts may be treated not only as "presentations" that concentrate on the effects on the observers of the spectacle, but also as a "vehicles" that concentrate on what

is going on within the performer, for whom his art is a kind of "yoga" (Grotowski 1992).

Grotowski started his activity in forms more akin to conventional theater but gradually transformed them into ritualistic forms he interpreted as a return to the roots of the theater in religious ritual. An important point in this evolution was his journey to India in 1973, after which he abandoned conventional theater and started his para-theatrical projects described as looking for something which is at the roots of yoga, tantra, Zen, shamanism, and Eleusis (Grotowski, 1979). Among these rituals, a prominent place is occupied by Yoga, which fascinated him since childhood through books, studies of Indian philosophy and religion, performance of the classical Indian theatrical masterpiece "Siakuntala," where for the first time hatha yoga exercises were introduced as an element in the actor's training (Górawski, 1988), paratheatrical projects like "Journey to the East," taking the form of workshops lasting several days in a secluded place, in which several hundred young people from Poland and abroad took part and, finally, his present ritual activities in his center in the village of Pontedera in Italy, much closer to a traditional Hindu ashram than a classical theater.

Although Grotowski vehemently denied the assumptions of many of his interpreters that he is creating a new religion, many commentators stressed the para-religious character of the later phases of his activity: "while he is not founding a religion per se, he is providing fertile soil for the basic religious interest, in overcoming the material and existential limitations of everyday life by transforming the everyday world, opening up to ultimate transformation. For Grotowski, disclosure of the unbound, or creative or spontaneous self is the 'ground' of both theater and religion" (Alexander 1991:66).

In the mid-70s, hinduistic missions started to appear in Poland, at first, in the fields more connected to psychotherapy than to religion.

The first was Transcendental Meditation (TM). In August 1975, L. Domash, K. Wallace, and D. Orme-Johnson from the Maharishi European University presented research results on TM at the Physiological Conference in Gdańsk. Soon the first TM courses started in Warsaw, Poznań, Świdnica,

Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Zakopane, and Lublin in which about 1,000 individuals took part. After a successful start, however, political difficulties began to appear which blocked the development of this movement for over a decade. The TM movement was refused official recognition until 1989, when the Polish Transcendental Society was finally registered. At present, about 10,000 people have been taught the principal technique of meditation, 180 have taken part in a Siddhi course, and 34 have participated in the Teachers course. In April 1995, the "Party of the Natural Law" was founded.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) whose beginnings were also connected with psychotherapy, is another example of a hinduistic religious movement. In 1976, its missionaries took part in the Hippie gathering in Częstochowa at the invitation of Dr. Zbigniew Thille, the Director of the above mentioned Mental Hospital in Lubiąż. As in the case of TM, ISKCON also had to wait over ten years from its first informal functions to the moment of its registration in 1988. ISKCON was, however, far better known despite its lack of official recognition. For several years now, its followers can be seen on the streets of larger cities. Dressed in traditional Hindu attire, they distribute religious literature (usually published outside of Poland). In the nineties, after registration, the movement started to grow dynamically and is now the biggest Hindu community in Poland, widely known due to its "Food for Life" program, which has received positive recognition in the media.

At the end of the 1970s Rebirthing appeared in Poland, after the first visit of its founder in 1979, when he initiated into this technique a small group of psychotherapists. However, many of them soon abandoned this technique due to the reported neurophysiological consequences of hyperventilation, which is an important part of this technique. The movement has split into two parts, one registered as a religious body stressing the Hinduistic elements in its doctrine and practice and the other cultivating this method as an alternative therapy.

Other religious and parareligious Hindu movements active in Poland include Ajapa Yoga, Art of Living, Ananda Marga, Baba Ji, Brahma Ku-

maris, Raja Yoga, Bhagawan Rajneesh, Chaitanya Mission, Chinmoy Centre, Divine Light Mission, Fivefold Path (Agnihotra), Hatha Yoga Academy, Sahaja Yoga, Sai Baba, Sant Mat, Siddha Yoga Dham. They are smaller than ISKCON and not always officially registered as a religious body, sometimes as an ordinary association (TM), a charity (Ananda Marga), or functioning as an informal group. In contrast to Buddhism in Poland, in the case of Hinduism we do not observe any significant attempt to integrate this great variety of Hindu movement into any kind of a single organisation similar to the Buddhist Union in Poland, which was founded in 1995. Due to this organisational diversity and the ability to form connections with other cultural domains, Hinduism is more widespread than Buddhism, but also seen as more controversial and more loosely connected to the traditional domain of religion. That is perhaps one of the reasons why we can sometimes, find in surveys questions concerning Buddhism but not Hinduism, despite the greater popularity of the latter.

I. Knowledge, Interest and Participation in Hinduism in Poland

The popular notion of a very dynamic growth in oriental movements in the early nineties is only partly reflected in the actual numbers which may be treated as reliable. Both the number of groups and the number of their members is not growing much faster than before. In the case of the movements registered as a religious body, more detailed information on their membership is gathered by the Main Statistical Office. The growth of membership in some of these movements during recent years is quite high, although not all the figures presented by the movements themselves are completely reliable as in the case of Chaitanya Mission (see table 1), which seems to be exaggerated. But others have declined, such as Ananda Marga, or even completely disappeared, such as the Divine Light Mission.

Table 1

The number of believers of ISKCON, Brahma Kumaris, Ajapa Yoga and Chaitanya Mission in 1990 and 1992

Movement	1990	1992
Ajapa Yoga Union	93	160
International Society of Krishna Consciousness Bhakti Yoga –	800	827
World Spiritual “Brahma Kumaris Raja Yoga” University	81	144
Institute of Identity – Chaitanya Mission	526	1060

In the case of movements registered as a religious body it is also possible to analyse the geographical distribution of their membership, which is concentrated mainly in big towns and in the western and northern regions with high rates of population mobility after World War II.

Table 2

The number of believers of ISKCON, Brahma Kumaris, Ajapa Yoga and Chaitanya Mission in particular voivodeships (data gathered by Main Statistical Office in 1992)

Voivodeship	name			
	ISKCON	Brahma Kumaris	Ajapa Yoga	Chaitanya Mission
Warszawskie	100	80		80
Bialskie				
Białostockie	30		3	
Bielskie	15			
Bydgoskie	20		1	
Chełmskie				
Ciechanowskie	15			
Częstochowskie	10			
Elbląskie	10			
Gdańskie	70	25		50
Gorzowskie	7			
Jeleniogórskie	30			
Kaliskie				
Katowickie	60			300
Kieleckie	5			30
Konińskie			1	

Voivodeship	name			
	ISCKON	Brahma Kumaris	Ajapa Yoga	Chaitanya Mission
Koszalińskie	30			
Krakowskie	40	5		200
Krośnieńskie				
Legnickie			1	
Leszczyńskie	15			
Lubelskie	20			300
Łomżyńskie	10			
Łódzkie	15	20	66	
Nowosądeckie	5			
Olsztyńskie	30			
Opolskie	10			100
Ostrołęckie				
Piłskie				
Piotrkowskie	3		1	
Płockie				
Poznańskie	50			
Przemyskie	10			
Radomskie				
Rzeszowskie	10			
Siedleckie	7			
Sieradzkie				
Skierniewickie			1	
Słupskie	14			
Suwańskie	40		45	
Szczecińskie	24	13		
Tarnobrzskie	15		1	
Tarnowskie	10			
Toruńskie	15			
Wałbrzyskie	30			
Wrocławskie				
Wrocławskie	40			
Zomijskie	5			
Zielonogórskie	10			
All believers	827	144	120	1060
All priests	323*	16	1	15
All members	1150	160	121	1075

* Initiated members

Despite the fact that the number of members associated with both religious and para-religious movements in Poland is rather small, the range of influence of ideas and practices related to them is much broader. In some segments of the population, such as among students, the receptivity to Hinduism

(knowledge and participation rate in Hinduistic movements) is quite significant. Sometimes the extrapolated figures from the surveys, asking about contact with the movement, may even exceed the number of fully devoted members at a given point of time. The majority of these contacts are, however, casual and may happen at different points of time in one's biography.

Table 3
Knowledge of and participation in new religious and para-religious movements of Hindu origin among high school students in Warsaw in 1984 and 1989 (Doktór 1991)

Name of the movement	1984 (N = 402)			1989 (N = 165)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Agnihotra	4.5	1.5	1.0	8.5	1.2	3.0
Ananda Marga	2.0	0.5	0.2	1.2	0.6	0.6
Hare Krishna	51.5	6.2	2.0	50.3	10.3	1.8
Yoga	58.2	15.2	16.7	55.2	18.2	16.4
Transcend. Med.	19.7	2.0	5.2	30.3	4.2	5.5
Rebirthing	6.7	1.2	1.7	9.1	4.2	1.8
Theosophy	11.4	0.5	0.5	21.8	0.6	1.2

1 – have heard or read; 2 – have had some contact; 3 – have taken part

The analysis of data shown in the chart may lead to the conclusion that only knowledge about movements of Hindu origin has increased whereas the level of active participation in their practices has remained on the same level during the five years from 1984 to 1989.

Among various dimensions of the world view of Polish students studied with the help of the World View Questionnaire developed in Finland and later applied in a comparative research project in several countries (Bjorquist et al., 1990) were also beliefs and practices connected with Hinduism.

Table 4

Score for hinduistic scales for students in different countries (Bjorquist et al., 1990)

Country	Hinduistic beliefs and practices			
	a	b	c	d
Finland	1.51	1.40	2.00	0.34
USA	1.84	1.28	1.81	0.39
India	2.45	1.59	2.48	0.82
Holand	2.07	1.40	2.21	0.42
Poland	2.21	2.06	2.48	0.70
Mexico	1.87	1.88	2.24	0.93

a – personal interest in Hindu thought; b – belief in reincarnation; c – personal interest in meditation and vegetarianism; d – personal experience of the practice of yoga, mediation, and vegetarianism

Hinduistic beliefs and practices, studied in 1987, were more widespread in Poland than in other countries. A similar phenomenon was also observed in the European Value Study in the case of belief in reincarnation (Zulehner and Denz, 1993). The high rate of acceptance of Hinduism after six years has slightly declined, probably due to the anticult campaign, which targeted some hinduistic movements. This decline was not, however, on the whole statistically significant (Doktór 1994a).

Table 5

The rate of acceptance of statements connected with Hinduistic beliefs and practices presented as a mean score for a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (absolutely no agreement) to 4 (total agreement)

Statement	1987 n = 95	1992 n = 183
a) Personal interest in Hindu thought		
1. I believe in the law of cause and consequences (Karma)	2.54	2.78
2. I have at least occasionally tried yoga or meditation	1.49	1.54
3. I have read books about eastern philosophy and religion	2.21	1.80
4. I feel attracted to eastern religions	2.25	1.88
5. People from the West could learn much from Indian Philosophy	2.79	2.64

b) Reincarnation		
6) Man is born into life in order to realise himself, he is born again and again until the goal is reached	2.29	1.97
7. I believe in reincarnation	1.81	1.62
8. Not only man but also animals have a soul	2.24	2.20
c) Personal interest in yoga, meditation, and vegetarianism		
9. It is possible to know ones true self through meditation	2.80	2.46
10. I have tried vegetarian food	2.12	2.20
11. Yoga and meditation are methods which bring inner peace	2.68	2.54
d) Personal experience in yoga, meditation, and vegetarianism		
12. I am a vegetarian	.75	.67
13. I am used to practicing yoga regularly	.58	.49
14. I am used to practicing meditation regularly	.93	.92

II. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Members

Although members of Hindu movements are usually younger than the general population, not all of these groups may be called “youth religions.” Those who participate in religious movements (stressing the religious character of their doctrine and practice and demanding higher level of involvement) are younger, while members of para-religious movements are usually older. The average member age of Ananda Marga is 24 years (Platajs, 1985), whereas that of a para-religious movement known as Agnihotra is 46 (Kubiak, 1990), and regular TM meditators, 51 years (Baran 1989).

Quite characteristic is an over-representation of better educated individuals, who may be more prone to cultural innovations and better informed about them. The proportion of members with academic education is relatively high; 87% among regular TM meditators (Baran, 1989). Among movements recruiting from the younger segments of the population many members are students as in Ananda Marga – 62% (Platajs 1985).

Many of them are unmarried, because of their young age, but in some movements we also find an over-representation of unmarried adult individuals. This may be the result of personal lifestyle choices (in those groups where celibacy is highly valued, as in Brahma Kumaris) or a compensation for a lack of other social bonds.

The data concerning religious background are not quite consistent. Włodzimierz Platajs (1985) states that 95% of Ananda Marga "have a Roman Catholic background." But when an ordinal scale measuring the degree of religiosity is used, results are quite different. Practitioners of yoga, TM, and Agnihotra among members of the The Polish Psychotronic Society in the early eighties, more often describe their father as less religious (Doktór, 1990).

Another significant element connected with family background is the relatively high rate of father absence among members of Hindu movements. The average number of years of father absence in the first twenty years was 1.5 among Brahma Kumaris, 2.5 among practitioners of Rebirthing, and 3.4 among advanced TM meditators, in comparison to 1.5 in the control group (Doktór, 1993). Father absence seems to be a factor predisposing to choose an alternative rather than conventional religion and lifestyle, and to seek a father-figure in the spiritual leader of the movement (in the case of movements with female leaders as in Brahma Kumaris this factor does not seem to be influential).

III. Psychological Characteristics of Members

In the recent debate concerning new religious and para-religious movements of Oriental origin, questions concerning psychological health and personality traits of their members often appear as one of the hottest topics. In an exploratory study, an attempt has been made to study the psychological profile of members of Brahma Kumaris Raja Yoga, Rebirthing, and Transcendental Meditation with the help of four psychological tests related to the general personality description as measured by the Adjective Check List (Gough and Heilbrunn 1980), narcissism as

measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory developed by Raskin and Hall (1979), the meaning of life as measured by the Purpose in Life Test (Crumbaugh and Maholick, 1964), and anxiety as measured by the IPAT Anxiety Scale (Cattell 1964).

Table 6

NPI, PLT, IPAT and ACL scores (Means and correlations with the time of membership) for members of Brahma kumaris, Rebirthing, Transcendental Meditation, and control group

Scales	Group						
	BKum. n = 18		Rb N = 16		TM N = 16		control N = 16
	Mean	cor.	Mean	cor.	Mean	cor.	Mean
NPI	17.9	-.02	16.1	.35	12.3	.21	16.0
PLT	122.2	-.16	106.5	.36	107.5	.46	99.2
IPAT	6.1	-.67	6.7	.06	6.6	.79	6.9
ACL:							
Modus operandi							
Number of adj.	47.2	-.44	54.4	-.13	43.6	-.02	45.2
Favorable adj.	46.3	-.59	39.7	-.13	44.0	-.08	39.7
Unfavorable adj.	50.2	-.26	58.9	-.46	52.4	-.04	59.7
Communality	39.7	-.31	32.2	-.01	39.8	-.21	33.6
Need scales:							
Achievements	48.8	-.30	39.3	-.17	47.6	-.02	40.3
Dominance	47.7	-.03	40.9	-.14	43.8	-.16	39.7
Endurance	51.2	-.47	40.3	-.14	47.9	.08	41.1
Order	52.3	-.29	46.1	-.22	49.2	.22	41.8
Intracception	48.0	-.51	41.7	-.16	46.8	.01	40.9
Nurturance	49.0	-.51	40.9	-.03	48.0	-.03	42.9
Affiliation	47.7	-.49	43.2	-.07	44.6	.06	41.9
Heterosexual	46.0	-.40	43.4	.24	42.8	-.14	46.2
Exhibition	46.9	.15	49.3	.41	46.9	-.34	48.7
Autonomy	48.5	.47	52.8	.37	46.9	.50	51.3
Aggression	46.1	.46	48.1	.06	45.7	-.23	50.6
Change	46.3	.19	46.3	.12	46.3	-.40	48.5
Succorance	52.8	.24	53.4	-.31	55.1	-.25	59.7
Abasement	52.8	-.03	53.9	-.35	56.8	-.10	58.4
Deference	52.3	-.25	47.8	-.02	55.6	-.02	49.0

Scales	Group						
	BKum. n = 18		Rb N = 16		TM N = 16		control N = 16
	Mean	cor.	Mean	cor.	Mean	cor.	Mean
Topical scales:							
Counseling read.	51.9	.42	53.1	-.29	50.2	.26	53.0
Self-control	54.7	-.44	49.2	.03	53.7	.38	48.9
Self-confidence	48.2	-.16	40.6	-.24	45.8	-.04	40.8
Personal adjustment	46.5	-.56	40.9	-.06	44.3	-.01	39.6
Ideal self	53.9	-.34	48.1	-.02	48.4	.03	43.6
Creative person	51.2	-.34	48.6	-.06	49.3	-.08	50.3
Military leader	47.5	-.41	38.3	.00	45.1	.13	40.1
Masculinity	48.4	.04	47.6	.19	47.2	-.03	43.0
Femininity	42.2	-.35	44.9	.22	48.4	-.05	46.9
Transact. A. sc.:							
Critical parent	49.6	.42	51.6	-.22	49.8	-.12	48.6
Nurturing parent	50.1	-.43	40.8	-.18	46.4	.06	40.6
Adult	50.1	-.28	41.1	.26	44.0	.31	36.9
Free child	46.9	-.05	45.1	.03	45.9	-.10	45.8
Adapted child	50.9	.28	57.3	.02	52.9	-.12	59.7
Origence - intellectence sc.:							
high O., low I	42.8	-.16	50.1	.05	46.0	-.02	51.7
high O., high I.	51.0	.31	55.8	-.11	52.8	-.00	58.4
low O., low I	48.1	-.53	46.4	-.12	46.4	.12	45.8
low O., high I	51.7	-.13	45.6	-.01	52.5	-.02	45.6

The greatest significant differences (controlled for age) with the control group were observed in the case of the Brahma Kumaris, a movement which expects the greatest commitment from its members and also has the highest level of tension with the surrounding environment. Its members have clear sense of meaning and purpose in life (PLT – differences significant at the level of .02), a more positive self-image (Fav – $p < .04$), see themselves in a more stereotypical way (Com – $p < .02$), are dominant (Dom – $p < .05$), with high endurance (End – $p < .05$), self-control (Scn – $p < .04$), and self-confidence (Scf – $p < .03$), personally adjusted (Pad – $p < .03$), with military leadership abilities (MLs – $p < .05$), nurturing attitude (Np – $p < .04$), mature (A – $p < .002$), high origence and low intellectence (A1 – $p < .005$), high origence and low intellectence (A2 – $p < .02$).

In contrast to the positive characteristics of the "static" psychological profile of members of Brahma Kumaris, the "dynamic" profile of personality change during the time of membership in the movement is more ambivalent and generally regresses toward the mean for the population. Nearly all ACI scales, which were elevated in the "static" profile, decline with the time of membership. The total number of adjectives checked and the number of positive adjective decline, as well as the need for endurance, intraception, nurturance, affiliation, heterosexual, self-confidence, military leadership, and the critical parent attitude replaces nurturing parent attitude. Significant growth is observed in the counseling readiness scale which is interpreted by Gough and Heilbrunn (1980) as a tendency to change one's own psychological functioning. More favorable changes are also visible in the decline of the anxiety level.

The quite dramatic psychological characteristics of participation observed in this group may be interpreted as caused by the tendency to present themselves in a more favorable light. It is more marked among beginners than advanced members.

The psychological profile of members of movements which do not put such high demands on members as Brahma Kumaris are not so much different from the control group. Practitioners of TM have less negative self-image than the control group ($Unf - p < .01$), a tendency to submissive behaviour in relation with others ($Def - p < .05$), and greater origence and intellectence ($A2 - p < .006$), and practitioners of Rebirthing are not significantly different from the control group.

Among practitioners of Rebirthing we can observe the decline in communality (stereotypisation of the self-concept) and growth of the need of autonomy (the latter also among the practitioners of TM) during the time of membership.

The psychological profile and its changes during the time of membership, falsify rather than confirm the stereotype popularised in the media about the psychopathological reasons and consequences of participation in these movements. They, however, also do not confirm the notions spread by their followers that participation in them is particularly psychologically beneficial.

The members' characteristics are quite similar to the characteristics of the general population and differ positively from some aspects (sense of meaning and purpose in life and more positive self-image). Likewise, the socio-demographical characteristics of members differ positively in some aspects from the characteristics of the general population (for example, in the question of education) and their psychological characteristics are more positive than negative.

IV. Social Reception of Hinduism in Poland

The relatively tolerant atmosphere around Hindu movements in Poland began to change at the end of the last decade when they began to be perceived as a threat and as part of a more generalised "sect problem." The degree of generalisation is often so high, that in press articles concerning the "threat of sect" no names of those groups are given. But if names are published, they usually include ISKCON, Brahma Kumaris, Chinmoy, and Chaitanya Mission among the most controversial. In contrast to Buddhism, whose presence is now almost unnoticed, Hinduistic groups often appear in the media as an object of critique and controversy.

In Poland, as in other countries, two ways in which the "sect problem" is constructed may be distinguished: "organicist" and "individualistic" (Beckford, 1984). In the first case, the reaction is dominated by a desire to protect a united religious culture, which is often connected to the sense of national identity, and in the second a threat to individual freedom is emphasised. The first type seemed to dominate in Poland, when the presence of "sects" were noticed, and was verbalised for the first time by John Paul II (1987: 11), who in his Westerplatte Sermon to Polish Youth, compared "sects and other unions, which are so alien to the culture, tradition and spirit of our nation" to alcoholism and drug addiction. Since that time, this interpretation is a dominant theme in many Catholic publications. In Autumn 1995, The Forum of Catholic Women used this argument in an appeal for the constitutional prohibition of sect activity.

It also stimulates the anti-cult sentiments of those segments of Polish society in which the combination of religious and nationalistic identifications are the closest as in the Bureau for Information and Documentation of New Religious Movements and Sects organised by the "Civitas Christiana" (formerly "Pax"), a nationalistic religious association closely cooperating with the communist regime before 1989.

The "individualistic" response to non-traditional religious groups, which now seem to dominate in the media, stresses the negative individual consequences of participation. They are interpreted as a threat to the freedom and psychological balance of the individual. Their members are seen as brainwashed, hypnotised, and manipulated by totalitarian groups whose primary aim is to identify and amplify latent psychopathology for the purpose of recruitment and exploitation. The primary social vehicle for this type of response is usually voluntary associations of "victims" (ex-members and "concerned parents"), often supported by psychiatrists and clinical psychologists. Their development is, however, dependent on the level of social self-organisation. The tradition of voluntary associations was largely eroded in post-Communist societies so this particular form of response is not as strong as, for example, it is in the U.S.A. where it is the primary response. In Poland, they usually cooperate more closely with traditional churches and are dependent on anti-cult organisations in the West (such as CAN or the Dialog Center) for their material, training of the personnel and publications. Sometimes they even mirror their names and forms of activity as in the case of the Polish equivalent of the French "Les Associations de Defense de la Famille et de l'Individu" (with the same name in Polish).

Because both types of response often appear together, "psychopathological" or "criminal" arguments against sects are also frequently used by the churches or their specialised agencies. Usually they repeat interpretations from Western popular anti-cult literature without any reference to academic studies. This interpretation often obscures the underlying sources of conflict and is functional in terms of building a coalition against targeted groups in wider segments of society. Formulations that use paramedical or criminal

metaphors are among the most frequently used by the media thus making existing conflicts more difficult to resolve.

At least some Hindu movements have also gotten positive coverage in the media. It is most often connected with their actions like ISKCON's "Food for Life" or peace activities performed by Brahma Kumaris or the Chimnoy Center. Generally, however, Hindu movements in Poland, in contrast to the earlier period, are seen less as a cultural innovation which might have many positive consequences than as a problem whose negative consequences should be minimalised.

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THE REVIVAL OF ANIMISTIC RELIGION IN THE MARI EL REPUBLIC

The revival of animistic religion in the Mari El Republic since the beginnings of the 1990s has become a notable event which has astonished the public and alarmed the Russian Orthodox Church to such an extent that in 1993 the Holy Synod decided to create a special separate eparchy (the hundredth in Russia) with its center in the capital of the Mari El Republic, Ioshkar-Ola.

After a sensational article in "Nesavicimaya Gazeta"¹ our political scientists and students of culture began to call the Mari people "the last animistic nation in Europe." The officially registered Mari Religious Center of the "true faith" supporters, "Oshmarij-Tchimarij," led by the well-known Mari writer, Alexander Uzykayn, has become unique in the social and political history of modern Russia. Mass public prayers attended by thousands of believers at Mari "holy groves" with Pagan rituals and sacrifices seem to the European consciousness to be an absurd and fantastic immersion in the past with the help of a "time machine."

From the point of view of common sense, this phenomenon in Europe at the end of the twentieth century, the end of the millennium, is incredible. The more seriously the ancient Pagan faith is taken in the Mari Republic by the people, intellectuals, the political elite, and even the authorities of state power, the more the religious life of the Mari Republic is of interest

¹ Filatov, S., Stchipkov, A. *The Hundredth Eparchy*, 1994, 17 March, p. 5).

to the outside world. A profound knowledge of national history, culture, and all the special features of the local situation – all the weak and strong points in the national democratic movement “Marij ushem,” all the subtleties of Russian-Mari relations and sub-ethnic distinctions between “mountain” and “plains,” Mari inhabitants are necessary. Mari animism must be considered in the context of processes common to all the national and religious movements in the ethno-political realm of the former USSR. This methodological approach will make it possible to explain this natural phenomenon and its place in the dynamic system of the new emerging Russian social reality, its politics and culture.

Religious factors play an important political and psychological role in the national movements of the Russian peoples. Its main thrust is not to spread some new religious concept, but to revive the old, sometimes very ancient, traditions of this geographic and ethnic religious area.

The primary tradition is Christianity in its Eastern Orthodox version. Christianity has played a crucial role in mobilising and integrating the growing national self-awareness of the Russian people and Russian national movements across a wide political spectrum, up to its most reactionary monarchistic wing.

Another important tradition is Islam of the Sunnite variety. Its ranges in Russia are the Middle Volga Banks and North Caucasus, or otherwise, the ethnic cultures of the Tatars, Bashkirs, and the overwhelming majority of the mountain and steppe peoples of South European Russia.

Buddhism (Lamaism) has also played a role. It is spread among Buryats of the Baikal region, the Tuvintzis, and Kalmyks.

The national movements of the Diaspora, spread across the vast Russia expanses cut historical ethnic minorities off from their motherlands. These peoples also appeal to their traditional religions. The Catholic banner is raised by the Congress of Poles in Russia. They are leading the fight for the return of Catholic churches to their believers. In the struggle for their rights, Russian Germans rely on the Lutheran or the more narrow Mennonite traditions. Synagogues have become centers of spiritual and civil mobilisation for the Jewish communities of Russia and so on.

General patterns are revealed on this wide background. A religious factor in the national movements of the present time (in the Russian geopolitical sphere) appears as a stabilising, conservative tendency. It finds its expression in the reanimation of old, traditional religions, whereas the various religious innovations and fads, the construction of new religious doctrines and sects, the adoptions (most often from the cultural treasury of the Far East) are international in nature and not in touch with the tangle of problems that the national and national liberation movements of the Russian peoples are trying to resolve.

For example, devotees of Krishna wandering Russian territory (perhaps well-known abroad, but new and unusual in Russia) are the representatives of other nations which have forgotten their own nationality. Their thoughts are turned to global human questions of morality, emotional peace, or mutual understanding. There is no "Russian," or "Tartar," or "Burjat," or any other ethnic problem for them. Different kinds of adventurers, proclaiming themselves prophets and messiahs, have assembled obedient brotherhoods to appeal to their "brothers and sisters" of any ethnic origin, irrespective of their nationality.

After all, Communism, if we may consider it to some extent a new religion of the twentieth century, has been a proponent of the same translational system, demanding worship of their idols from all "people of labour" and proclaiming a principle of "proletarian internationalism" and a mortal hatred of nationalism of any stripe.

Traditional religions that have taken root on this land are quite another thing. They have long histories and a stable position on the confessional map of the world. They are not formed anew, reformed, or regenerated, but restored to their positions, reconstructed by the national movements of the present. The most exact descriptions of this process are "revival" and "Religious Renaissance." Traditional religions have been included in the national movements, which at that moment became (at least in part) religious movements and, according to their ideology, to be a member of the Orthodox Church is to be a Russian and to be Muslim is to be a Tartar and so on for a long list of the great and small nations. Thus they preserve their own

identity, culture, language, mentality, and special dissimilarity to neighboring Russian peoples.

But an inevitable contradiction between the universal character of the world religions and the aspirations of the national movements, which are concerned with the fate of their own nation and ethnicity, not with a boundless international community (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and so on), arises and intensifies.

Representatives of smaller nations which are included in a common religious zone with a neighbouring or surrounding people of another nation but the same faith, have found themselves in the most complex situation. In those (rather infrequent in modern Russia) cases where there are no important conflicts, for example, territorial disagreements, problems of unjustly separated state organisation, prolonged discrimination or just plain ethnopsychological incompatibility, they can stand together under a common religious banner and demonstrate their spiritual solidarity. More often a struggle for this banner begins and as soon as it is firmly in the hands of the strongest national group (and the political organisations that express its interests), the national movements that represent the weaker groups and ethnic minorities find themselves in a state of confusion. They reveal a paradoxical readiness to refuse the religious "Revival" they share in common with their neighbours and strive for their own special confessional niche. Because this niche could not be constructed artificially and anew (because such a movement would not be supported by the people), they find a way out in the revival of even more ancient (than Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and so on), local, and forgotten religions: these are the pagan cults, animistic ideas, shamanism, and so on.

The Mari people are not alone in this respect, though they have gone further along the road of revival of their pagan past than most. Analogous tendencies have been observed in the national movements of Mordovia, in other regions of the Russian Ugro-Finnish North, and most of all in the Turkic peoples (Tchuvashi, Yakuts, etc.) that had converted to Christianity. This Neo-Paganism represents a desire to oppose the Russian majority, safeguard their own ethnic identity and strengthen it with an additional

bulwark of defensive ideological constructions. They are based on hypertrophied notions of a special religious way of "our people." The formula "I am Eastern Orthodox, but I am not Russian. I am... (Mari, Tchuvas, Yacut, etc.)" is not effective as a weapon in defending the ethnic identity of small nations. The notion that "if you are Eastern Orthodox, you must be Russian" dominates. From a distance, the ethnic differences inside the Orthodox world seem microscopic, hardly worth taking into consideration. Therefore, these national movements choose another formula which seems to them optimal for opposing any assimilating tendencies: "I am not Eastern Orthodox and, consequently, am not Russian."

It is significant that even in relations between large and closely related east-Slavic ethnic groups (Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians) withdrawal from the Orthodox faith (the people of the Ukraine and Belorussia who became members of the Uniate Church) always irritated "the elder brother," the Russian people, and served "the younger brothers" – the Ukrainians and Belorussians as a defense for their languages, culture, national character, and sometimes state organisation against both enforced and natural Russification.

The non-Slavic nations of eastern Russia that were not under the protection of the union with the Catholic Church, searched for their own special way to resist the imperialistic forces and tendencies toward assimilation. They found their way in the revival of the Pagan past in modern culture, modern lifestyles, and mass mentality.

If we ignore the political aspect of this choice, the return to Paganism seems to be historical nonsense, a wild anachronism, a gap in progress, a refusal of modernisation and a return of the whole of the European people to the depths of antiquity, as a triumph of ignorance and obscurity over mind and progress. But as part of the carefully planned political program of the national-liberation movement, Mari Neo-Paganism (and less boldly following their example, the modern Paganisms of the Tchuvas, Komi, Erzya, Moksha, Hanty, and other peoples of Russia) is no worse than any other political myth (for example, the myth of their own ancient state organisation) that has become a weapon in the anticolonial, national-liberation

struggle of the oppressed peoples which have been forcibly integrated into the Russian Empire.

The Russian Orthodox Church is drawing closer to the imperial "patriotic" forces, more actively penetrating the state apparatus (evidence of this was a recent meeting between the Minister of Defense, Pavel Gratchov, and leaders of the Synod which instituted regimental priests in the Russian Army) and more openly declaring the Church's claim to a spiritual monopoly in Russia. As the Church does so, the Neo-Pagan revival in the cultures and national movements of the smaller nations will strengthen and spread – from the Mari banks of the Volga, on to the whole of European North Russia, the Urals, Siberia, and the Far East, and on to all the unruly peoples of Russia.

It should be emphasised, that there is nothing unusual in this appeal to Paganism that arises from political polemics and the sharpening of conflicts between nations. These phenomena can be observed not only in the traditional preserves of the Eastern Orthodox Christian faith. To the north of the Buddhist world (in the eastern outlying districts of modern Russia, where Lamaism is widespread, especially in Tuva and Buryatia), many ancient and prolonged political arguments connected with the choice of historical tradition and state alignment (Tibet, Mongolia, China, Russia) have been tinged by the colours of religious confrontation, expressed in the conflict between "the yellow faith" (Lamaism) and "the black faith" (Shamanism). For example, in the Buryat national awareness the question "Who are we?" has fluctuated in a range between "We are Buddhists" and "We are Pagans" (not to mention the special self-awareness of the western, Orthodox Christian Buryats).

Even in the Islamic world, in which monotheist unity seems monolithic, political conflicts and national quarrels can cause nations to retreat to long forgotten and lost Pagan positions. The most "orthodox" Muslims, who seemed to Europeans fanatically convinced that "there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet," suddenly, hundreds of years after their conversion to Islam, call themselves animists or semi-animists. As the Tatar-Bashkir conflict, skillfully created by the Soviet politics of autonomy, is growing, the Bashkir "national minority" (according to the census of 1989

there are 5,522,096 Tatars in Russia and 1,345,273 Bashkirs) only unwillingly remembers that Bashkirs and Tatars are brothers in faith. Not only has an organisational division of the previously united Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of European Russia and Siberia (SDMES) into independent Tartar (with its center in Kazan) and Bashkir (with its center in Ufa) Muftiats taken place; but also a deeper spiritual division. Part of the Bashkir nation, led by their political elite and academic intelligentsia have returned to the animistic roots of their nomadic culture. Not willing to be Muslims alongside their Tartar neighbours, they name themselves the animists of Eurasia.

Even in the Caucasus, where the devotion of the Highlanders to Islam, tried by the fire of "gazzavat," sacred war against the Russian Empire, is especially strong, it has been revealed that not all Highlanders are Muslims. The stronger the devotion to Islam of the Turkic group of the northern Caucasus peoples (Karatchaevtsy, Balkartsy etc.), the more the peoples of Adygo-Tcherkess community doubt the Muslim basis of their culture. The Soviet authorities stirred up quarrels with their Turkic neighbors for such a long time and so skillfully, that their shared frameworks of state (the Karatchaev-Tcherkesskaya and Kabardino-Balkarskaya Republics) and religion (Islam) have become too crowded for them. Adygy, Abkhasy, Tcherkessy, and Kabardintsy choose to remember their Pagan "image" and the ancient Pagan basis of their national culture more often.

When faced with such phenomena, the question arises and demands a scientific answer, how much of all this paganism has been artificially created (and exists only as a myth that even its authors don't believe) and how much of it is real (in the sense of an idea possessing real power that controls the masses). It is not simple. It is only possible to understand modern paganism as a whole, and Mari Paganism in particular, when we have taken into consideration two cooperating forces.

On the one hand, it is a legend, a myth, a political fantasy, an instrument in the hands of the national movements and the party leaders. The producers of mass "public prayers in holy groves" stage them as giant dramatic performances and fairy tales, full of colourful beauty and melody, transforming the Pagan ritual into an esthetic happening.

By their revival of the ancient animistic mythology, painters perform a kind of celebrational ritual, creating bewitching images of the mysterious Gods, Ghosts, and Heroes. The painters, writers, directors, and producers of these performances (as well as the politicians who need these shows) become hypnotised by their own creations, so that their personal sincerity and faith is never doubted. But in reality all this is just political make-believe, a manipulation of the instincts, moods, and feelings of the people.

On the other hand, there is fertile soil for this, even in its extremes of mythopoeia, in the cultures of many nations of Russia. The very real current conditions and historical background have created the conditions for the revival of the animistic faith and its rituals, which have organically entered into domestic life, world views, and religious beliefs of the people. On an axiological level these preconditions and consequences of Neo-Paganism are double. Certainly cultural backwardness, the interruption of social development, isolation from the main centres of research, technological progress, and modernisation have encouraged the revival of animistic religions in remote and outlying districts of Russia. At the same time, it is difficult to deny that the rather superficial "Christianisation" (as well as "Islamisation" and contact with other monotheist religions) of many nations of Russia, although not seriously affecting their bases of ethnic culture and world outlook, has been more to their benefit than harm.

By retaining their pantheon of Pagan gods and ancient animistic views, shamanic rituals, festive and funeral customs, these nations have preserved many riches of their ancient culture, artistic mythology, historical memory, and an important system of ethnic and ecological landmarks.

The ecological aspect of Neo-animism, which is permeated by the inspired cult of native nature (holy groves, rivers, and animals), has a special significance in its becoming legal and legitimate.

It was not by chance that the law "about protection and rational use of the environment" which was accepted by the Supreme Soviet of the Mari El Republic in 1991, gave official status to the Mari "true faith." In the context of concern for preserving the environment, the 55th article of this law takes the Mari "holy groves," "the places of the traditional Mari prayers," under protection.

The aesthetic aspect of the Mari (and not only Mari) Neo-animism is exceptionally important. It has stimulated a revival in artistic production in the everyday life of the towns and countryside, a development of folk and professional art, validating its style with a canon sanctified by religious tradition, nourished by mythology, adding to its symbols the arcane meanings of the ancient magical glyphs. A new animistic spirit protects Mari artistic culture against absorption by post-modernist trends and complete dissolution in modern international styles. Today unique values exist in Mari art and their discovery was only possible in the atmosphere of Neo-animism which fascinated the painters, transformed them in its priests, and became itself the fruit of their talents and political and philosophical world view.

The finest examples of this movement, the paintings and graphic art of Izmail Yefimov, were created in the 1990s. A pantheist perception of the world dominates in them. In decorative patterns and ornamental wickerwork, fantastic mirages, the contours of fairytale characters, are vaguely discerned. They belong to the world of Mari animistic folklore, evoked by nature, the unique and not yet ruined flora and fauna of the Mari forests, in harmony with the stylisations of folk art. Their colossal inner energy expresses itself in the rhythm of geometrical compositions, in the dynamics of the rich burgundy, blue, and radiant green colors. The creative act of painting becomes part of a shamanic spell of mysterious power. **Библ. Жаг.**

Parallels to the oeuvre of Mari Izmail Yefimov are found in the national cultures of other minorities in Russia that are going through their own Pagan Renaissances. For example, the wonderful modern "petroglyphs" by the Chanty painter Gennadyi Rayshev ("The Ghost of the Forest," "The Tears of the Ancestors," "The Rhythms of Hunting," "The Woman of the Green Marsh"); the Tchuvas sculpture of Fiodor Madurov, whose bronze statues and wooden blocks have become idols before whom people worship; the world of the terrible Udmurt fairytales and forest miracles in the interpretation of Mensadyk Garipov; the magical element of the paintings on themes of the ancient Caucasian legends by Shalva Bedoev of Ossetia; the drawings of the Adyg artist Felix Petuvash, where the characters of the real world undergo fantastic metamorphosis, and together with magical signs and symbols, compose a complex whole.

ANTI-CULT MOVEMENTS: INTERSECTION BETWEEN CULTURE AND RELIGION

Among many social reactions stimulated by the appearance of New Religious Movements (NRMs) in various social settings, one can undoubtedly specify a very distinct one – the appearance of Anti-cult Movements. According to Eileen Barker (1995), Anti-cult Movements include “a wide variety of organisations with members as diverse as anxious parents, ex-members, professional deprogrammers, and exit counsellors” (Barker, 1995 p. 297). The Anti-cult Movements see their mission as disseminating in society the truth about the real (i.e. diabolic) character of the NRMs and helping people to avoid the danger connected with participation in NRMs as well as helping families rescue family members lost in cults.

We can analyse the function and role of these organisations as an outcome of two processes:

- The process of encounter between cultures and religions
- The process of intercultural communication

Such a phrasing of the starting point seems to be helpful in understanding two dimensions of the anti-cult movements: their resistance towards arguments that stress points of view different from their own, and their strength and vitality.

The theoretical concept of the encounter of religion was introduced by the Finnish scholar and comparative historian of religion, Juha Pentikäinen.

According to Pentikäinen (1976), the encounter between religions takes place on five different levels: universal, regional, local, social, and individual. An encounter on a universal level involves representatives of various religions who are dealing with the issues pertaining to macro-regions, broader than one nation or country. The average membership of the religions involved only follows in a very limited way the changes which are taking place as a consequence of such encounters. In the case of NRMs and Anti-cult Movements (ACMs), encounters between the leaders of NRMs and representatives of ACMs, leaders or leaders of established religious traditions are relatively rare. Their encounter occurs on the level of their global outreach via mass media or cyberspace: on the one hand, the proselytising actions or spiritual exercises directed by leaders of NRMs and, on the other, the global outreach of anti-cult literature produced by Anticult Movements.

The second kind of encounter has a more limited regional scope. It is usually limited by the borders of the state. The encounter stems from the necessity of adaptation of new religious groups to religions already present in the country given territory. The new religion can be accepted only if it can adapt itself in certain aspects to the religion already present in the given country territory. This type of encounter takes place every time that a new religious group surfaces in the given country. It can be argued that in the course of history the most common reaction to such a stimulus was the creation of an Anti-New Religion-Movement consisting basically of adherents of the old and established religious tradition(s). There is ample historical evidence for the regularity of such occurrences from the reaction of traditional Jews against Jesus' teachings to the Roman Catholic Church's reaction against Luther and further to nineteenth century religiously motivated persecutions and contemporary state-wide anticult organisations. Anti-cult Movements present themselves basically as defending "real religion" against "pseudoreligion." They also defend the identity of the country against "contamination" by the outside world (represented in this case by NRMs).

On an even more limited scale the same process takes place on the local level. The encounter between religions takes place because representatives of various religious traditions are living in the same city or village.

There is a mutual influence between all religions simultaneously present in a given territory. Some of the resulting changes are of a functional and some of a dysfunctional character. The most severe dysfunctional changes within religion will certainly be the creation of the image of “the other – alien – enemy” based on religious grounds.

The social level of encounter between religions takes place when a new religion enters a social network already saturated in another religious tradition. Representatives of the new tradition try to get followers by providing certain services on a community level (educational institutions, medical services, and advanced agricultural techniques are typical examples).

Anticult Movements on a local and social level operate by directing their activities towards concrete families, providing them with services like helping to get their children back from NRMs, disseminating information about NRMs, and influencing local governmental institutions.

The individual level of the encounter between religions takes place within an individual human psyche. An individual exposed simultaneously to different religious options present within his or her environment has to articulate his or her own worldview in which consciously or unconsciously, she or he includes some aspects of various religious traditions.

I. What culturally oriented Psychology of Religion can Offer for Better Understanding of the Encounter Process

What sort of contribution towards understanding of such a multi-valent and multi-faceted process could be offered by psychology of religion? Psychology of religion, as a discipline which deals with the phenomenon of religion from the point of view of theories and methods employed by psychology, seems to suffer from very serious limitations. This limitation could be most precisely described as a mono-cultural or mono-denominational bias. The majority of research is conducted within a single religious tradition and within one particular cultural setting. However, misleadingly enough,

the conclusions are very rarely limited to the sample (i.e. religious, and cultural tradition) to which they really belong.

The first condition for the psychology of religion to become relevant for understanding the dynamics of the encounter between religions requires massive changes in the general paradigm. Psychology must become cross-culturally rather than mono-culturally oriented.

Secondly, psychology of religion, which by virtue of its origin is Western-Christian biased, has to make every effort to avoid judging other religions by the criteria of one's own religious tradition. Cultural relativism seems to be self-evident; as in any scientific enterprise, it is one of the basic rules of the phenomenological study of religions. In practice, however, it is difficult to observe this rule. Our scientific-critical thinking, our total experience of life, our emotional, and volitional ways of reaction are strongly shaped by our specifically Christian presuppositions and Western ways of thought and life. This is true even with regard to the pseudo-forms and secularised forms of thought and life which are antithetical to claims of Christianity. There is no reason to expect that the same rules do not pertain to representatives of other religious traditions. One can probably pretty safely say that in most cases we are totally unconscious of the presuppositions stemming from the culture and religious tradition to which we belong. Needless to say, such silent assumptions create a perceptual background for all messages which we receive and send during an encounter with religious traditions different from our own.

Another aspect of inter-religious encounter which usually remains unrecognised pertains to language. According to Sapir-Wharf linguistic theory (Sapir, 1921; Wharf, 1956) language represents a culture and at the same time remains a key to the mental processes of its user. Some languages cope very successfully with expressing, for example, emotions which remain totally inexpressible in another language. The analysis conducted by linguists provide very convincing examples.

The situation is far more complicated with the translation of theological concepts. Even in the case of relatively similar cultures like English and German, the translation of terms pertaining to religious experience is a very

difficult task. The experience could be illustrated by the words of frustration of German scholar Ernst Benz preparing his lectures in English:

“It is really difficult to express in suitable English the experiences and thoughts of Meister Eckhard or a Jacob Boehme. How can one possibly express in English the meaning of German Geist? All the terms available – spirit, ghost, mind, reason, reasonableness – prove to be inadequate. They imply at the most one single element of the complex German term Geist. More difficult still proved to be the attempt to translate ontological terms. In trying to give the different meanings of Sein, Wesen, Wesenheit, Wesenhaftkeit, Substanz, and Essenz not to mention the translation of terms like Nichts, Nichtsein, Nichtigkeit, and Ungrund I met repeatedly with the adamant resistance of the English language. In the process of translating I found that the very structure of language itself seems to impede understanding” (Benz 1970, p. 117).

Such a situation has far reaching consequences for the process of the encounter between religions. Representatives of different religious traditions very often speak not only linguistically different languages but at the same time very often belong to different cultures. It creates a background for expectation that they perceive the world according to their own cultural background and their own mental world which is co-structured by the language they use. A very interesting language game takes place in the description of social reality by Anticult Movements and NRMs. It is often difficult to believe that they speak about the same facts. Switching into another semantic code by members of New Religions infuriates parents who later form various Leagues of Disquieted Parents claiming that their children use phrases nobody (meaning the parents) can really understand and when asked for clarification, they simply repeat the phrase which clearly points to the fact that they have been brainwashed.

The issue not to be avoided in the culturally informed approach towards the encounter between religions is the issue of stereotypes and their role in the process of inter-cultural communication. In very few cases the initial dialogue or encounter between religious traditions and subsequent communication process start without preconceived knowledge about the partners who enter into the interaction. Their knowledge is usually limited, but at

the same time highly emotionally charged. In many cases one can show that the initial part of the interaction starts from attempts to validate our own stereotypes about partners. The most popular conception of stereotypes stresses their propensity towards negative valuation of the object of stereotyping and very simplistic knowledge about it. A more dangerous feature of the stereotype, however, stems from the fact that it filters all new experiences and converts them into a non-antinomian type towards the original stereotype. In the communication process, these filters act on both sides, sender and receiver, in the communication process. That means that ACMs stay very immune to all information which does not conform to their preconceived knowledge about NRMs. NRMs, out of fear and perceived danger, try to keep confidential as much information about their lives possible. The first condition for a more meaningful communication between NRMs and ACMs seems to be following: not to block the acquisition of new experiences which are likely to change previous, often negative, attitudes towards the objects of stereotypes. Because religious issues belong to a highly sensitive sphere of human experiences, the stereotypes which pertain to such experiences are not only very strong and resistant towards changes, but they also might distort interpretation of newly acquired information.

Stereotypes become particularly active in the process which Waardenburg (1986,1991) describes as "value charged comparison" (Waardenburg 1991, p. 88). This is the spontaneous process which activates immediately upon encounter with representatives of a different religious tradition. The result of comparison in most cases is a negative one for the "alien" religion. Psychologically speaking, the encounter exposes the participants to a situation of cognitive dissonance which has to be solved in order to retain a positive self-image and internal comfort. The easiest way of solving the dissonance is a negative evaluation of the other religion, describing it as primitive or irrational. The comparison has not only a defensive character but, even more dangerously, it is deprived of contextual character. The culture within which the given religion functions loses its autonomous character and gets reduced to the culture of the participant in the encounter who conducts the comparison.

Culturally oriented psychology of religion might influence the outcome of an encounter between religious traditions by tracing all the unjust reductionism in mutual perception of the partners in such an interaction and in exposing defense mechanisms which they apply, in most of the cases, quite unconsciously. The psychology of religion might also contribute towards a better understanding of the fact stressed by Waardenburg (1986, 1991) that comparison of ideals which cannot be fully comprehended suffers from many shortcomings and points towards the existing borders of comparative research.

II. Anti-cult Movements in Poland

Currently in Poland there exist various kinds of anti-cult organisations which aim to propagate information about NRMs existing in this country but also provide consultations for journalists, teachers, and parents interested in helping someone "get out of a cult."

The main organisations are the following:

Movement for Defending the Family and Individual (Ruch Obrony Rodziny i Jednostki. address: 05-200 Wołomin, skrytka pocztowa 116).

Centre for Information and Documentation of New Religious Movements and Sects, Association "Civitas Christiana". (Biuro Informacji i Dokumentacji Nowych Ruchów Religijnych i Sekt, Stowarzyszenie "Civitas Christiana" address: 90-417, Łódź, ul. Piotrkowska 49).

Dominican Centre of Information about New Religious Movements (Dominikańskie Centrum Informacji o Nowych Ruchach Religijnych i Sektach. address: 31-043 Kraków, Stolarska Street 12).

Dominican Center for Sects and Cults (New Religious Movements). (Dominikańskie Centrum d/s Sekt i Kultów (Nowych Ruchów Religijnych). Poznań, ul. Kościuszki 99).

Besides the above organisations, most Roman Catholic dioceses and even parishes maintain information and consultation centres which provide opportunities for obtaining information about religious groups existing in the country and suggestions about methods of helping members of these groups to leave their newly acquired religious identities.

The personnel of these centres consists mainly of priests and professionals with a theological education. Some of them employ former members of the New Religious Movements as consultants.

An interesting aspect of their activities is the creation of publications. They not only present interpretations of the theology and history of the groups, but first and foremost, excerpts from individual stories which clearly apply a pathological model of the conversion to the groups and point to the debilitating character of participation in them (participation brings ill health, broken families, and ruined careers). At the same time, the publications present the proselytising efforts of the groups as irresistible and aimed at innocent youth. Church-sponsored Radio Stations (Radio Maryja) and TV programs also occasionally devote attention to highly critical presentations of the activities of the New Religious Groups and testimonies of ex-members and their families.

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21. LUT. 1998



Many sociologists stress that Post-Communist societies face a kind of ideological vacuum after the fall of Communism. The older order was ruined almost over night: the new perspectives and positive images of the future could not be built in the same way. Widely spread secularisation was undoubtedly one of the most striking features in countries of the former Soviet block. Describing present religiosity sociologists of religion talk about revival or reawakening of religion. Are there any generalisation that could be made in respect to all Post-Communist societies?